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ABSTRACT

Focusing on creating community partnerships via collaboration to support the growth and development of children and families, this guide is intended to enhance the knowledge and skills Head Start staff need to be full collaborative partners in community efforts to help families develop, nurture their children, and experience success. Following an introductory section, four modules are presented. Each module details expected outcomes, key concepts, background information, learning activities, and next steps. Handouts are included for each module.. Module One, "What is Collaboration?," distinguishes collaboration from the many other ways people work together. Module Two, "Elements of Success," describes elements that contribute to successful collaboration, along with strategies for decision-making and planning effective meetings. Module Three, "Challenges of Collaboration," examines typical collaborative challenges and potential sources of conflict among partners. Module Four, "Practicing the Collaborative Process," presents activities that allow participants to become an active player on a planning team and introduces evaluation and self-assessment tools. The final sections of the guide contain information on continuing professional development and resources. (SD)

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HEAD START

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Community Partnerships: Working Together

PS 027005

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth, and Families
Head Start Bureau

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HEAD START®

Community Partnerships: Working Together

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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Administration on Children, Youth, and Families
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● Photo courtesy of the Rosemount Head Start, Washington, D.C. ●

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Preface

LESSONS FROM GEESE

We can learn many lessons from nature.
For example, geese have much to teach us about working together.

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift of air for the bird that follows. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent more flying range than when each bird flies alone.

Lesson 1: People who share a common direction or vision can achieve their goals more quickly and easily when they share information, activities, and resources.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels resistance; the goose will quickly get back into formation and take advantage of the "lifting power" of the other birds.

Lesson 2: By working together, we can achieve common goals that otherwise could not be achieved alone.

When the lead goose gets tired, another goose takes the lead.

Lesson 3: It pays to assume new roles and share leadership.

The geese in formation will honk to encourage those up front to keep their speed.

Lesson 4: Taking the time to reflect on and celebrate achievements brings renewed energy and commitment.

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow their fellow member to provide protection. They stay with the goose until the bird is either able to fly again or dies. Then, they catch up with their flock or launch out on their own.

Lesson 5: All collaboratives face challenges. Depending on how the challenges are handled, they can either cause the collaborative to lose momentum and collapse, or they can be the springboard for creativity and revitalization.

Adapted with permission from Jon Seidel, *Lessons from the Geese* (Oakland, Calif.: EDP Consulting, Inc., 1997).

This guide focuses on creating community partnerships to support the growth and development of children and families to make their lives better. Without doubt, your Head Start program is already involved in community partnerships of varying levels. Some of those partnerships may be at the **communication** or **networking** level, where staff exchange information about community programs and services. Others may be at the **coordination** level, where staff work with other community agencies to avoid duplication of efforts or to fill gaps in services. **Cooperation** is yet another level of community partnership where two or more programs conduct joint activities to meet their individual goals.

Collaboration, however, is the most intense level of community partnership. It involves programs working together toward common goals could not be achieved by any program acting alone. Resources, information, and activities are shared by the collaborative partners to turn the goals into reality.

For Head Start programs across the country, collaboration poses both an opportunity and a challenge to get people and organizations to work together in new ways. The road to collaboration is neither straight nor easy. It involves changing the way people work and think. When people collaborate, they move from competing to consensus building, from working alone to including others, from thinking mostly about activities, services, and programs to thinking about the "big picture," and from focusing on short-term accomplishments to achieving long-term results[1]

We invite you, as managers, to actively support the development of collaborative partnerships in your community.

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[1] Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994).

Overview

You must be the change you wish to see.
—Mahatma Gandhi

Purpose

Community Partnerships: Working Together offers training opportunities for Head Start staff who want to make a difference in the lives of children and families by forging collaborative initiatives. This guide is built on two premises:

- We must do a better job of creating environments in which families can successfully carry out their responsibilities and succeed.
- We have neither the capacity nor the resources to do the job alone. The complex challenges families face in today's society can only be resolved through collaboration.

Doing things very differently than we've done them before, building trust, strategic planning, organizing and sustaining the effort, evaluating the results, and enjoying new ways of working together are all parts of collaboration. This guide explores these components, while providing a variety of activities to increase the collaborative skills of staff members.

Audience

Target audiences for this guide's training program are:

- **Head Start program managers and coordinators,** in their work to build strong community partnerships and enhance the collaborative skills of staff.
- **Head Start staff** directly involved in services to support families.
- **Head Start parents and other volunteers,** in their vital roles as collaborative partners.
- **Community leaders, consumers, child and family advocates, and service providers,** who are potential partners in collaboration.

Performance Standards

Head Start Program Performance Standards call for grantee and delegate agencies to take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs, and to ensure that Head Start programs respond to community needs.

The Performance Standards refer specifically to community partnerships as vehicles for collaboration. This guide's activities are designed to expand upon and reinforce the community partnership role of staff. That role, as stated in the Performance Standards, involves engaging, planning, and working with other agencies to improve, share, and enhance services, staff, information, and funds.

Organization

Community Partnerships: Working Together is part of a series of training guides developed to build the family support capacity of Head Start staff. As a technical guide, it focuses on the knowledge and skills staff need to be full collaborative partners in community efforts to help families develop, nurture their children, and experience success.

By completing the activities in this guide, participants will achieve the following **guide outcomes**:

- **Work** actively with other agencies and community members to improve community conditions, services, and resources for children and families;
- **Demonstrate** the skills necessary for forming and sustaining collaborative relationships; and
- **Participate** in strategic planning processes aimed at resolving complex community issues.

This guide is divided into four modules. Each module has specific outcomes for participants to achieve. The **module outcomes** evolve from the guide outcomes. The module's **background information** provides a context for trainers on the **key concepts** (the activity's main ideas) covered in the module. This guide includes the following modules:

- **Module 1:** ***What Is Collaboration?***

  This module distinguishes collaboration from the many other ways people work together. Activities point out the benefits of collaboration, connections between collaboration and Head Start Program Performance Standards, and the stages and milestones of the collaborative process. In addition, tools for assessing the local Head Start program's need and readiness for collaboration are presented and discussed.

- **Module 2:** ***Elements of Success***

  Successful collaboration requires more than merely a decision to work together. Certain elements are found in a successful collaboration and contribute to its achievements. In this module, staff recognize the elements that contribute to successful collaboration, review decision-making strategies, and plan effective meetings.

- **Module 3:** ***Challenges of Collaboration***

  Challenges and conflicts are inherent to the collaboration-building process. In this module, staff examine typical collaborative challenges and potential sources of conflict among partners. Activities offer staff the opportunity to practice strategies for dealing with both.

- **Module 4:** ***Practicing the Collaborative Process***

  In this module, participants assume an active role on a planning team. The module initially focuses on the first two stages of collaboration: getting together to explore how to improve community conditions and/or services, and building trust and ownership. This module also looks at the third stage of collaboration, developing a strategic plan. In practice activities, staff apply a strategic planning approach to the development of a collaborative initiative and are encouraged to "take action" by bringing their shared vision to life. In addition, ongoing evaluation and self-assessment tools—critical to the collaborative process—are discussed.

Follow-up training strategies, or **Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice**, are located at the end of each module. These activities help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress.

Training options are provided in this guide so that management teams can respond to the different learning styles of staff. Some local Head Start agencies may want to provide the guide's training program in the workshop format; others may want to use the coaching format; and still others may want to use a combination of both. These training strategies are described in the **Definition of Icons** section.

The **Continuing Professional Development** section lists activities that agencies may find useful for reinforcing and expanding the collaboration skills of staff members.

A **Resources** section, located at the end of the guide, describes books, journals, information systems, organizations, and audio/visual materials that offer in-depth information on topics covered in this guide.

Trainer or Coach Selection

In planning this guide's training program, management staff should carefully select the person or persons who will conduct the workshop and/or coaching activities. Trainers and coaches should be experienced in facilitating training sessions and in organizing or leading collaborations on behalf of families with young children. Other criteria to consider in trainer/coach selection are backgrounds in family-centered services, community organization, interagency agreements, and/or service system reform. Candidates may be found in colleges and universities, Head Start state collaboration projects, local Head Start programs, United Way agencies, and grassroots coalitions.

Introduction

Instructions

Before conducting the activities in this guide, prepare for the training event by reviewing the following:

- **Familiarize** yourself with the key concepts and background information. These sections provide a conceptual framework to support successful training delivery.

- **Plan** on completing all the module activities in either the coaching or workshop format to achieve the module's outcomes. While each activity is written to stand alone, most activities are sequential and build on previous material.

- **Evaluate** the activities and handouts to determine their appropriateness for participants. Activities are written for staff who regularly interact with families. However, if you find that some activities do not match staff training needs, feel free to adapt the activities and corresponding handouts.

- Use the time frames identified for each activity in the **At A Glance** only as a guide. Time will vary depending on the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's ability, and the flow of the discussion.

- **Review** with participants the agency's policy for maintaining group and family confidentiality before delivering all training sessions.

- **Involve** staff in identifying Head Start parents and volunteers, governing board members, policy groups, community leaders, business leaders, child and family advocates, and service providers who are potential partners in a collaborative effort. Extend invitations to them to join Head Start staff as participants in the modules' workshop activities. Workshop activities in Module 4 are particularly well-suited for a mix of participants. However, don't overlook possibilities for inviting potential partners to any of the workshops.

Definition of Icons

Coaching	A training strategy that fosters the development of skills through tailored instruction, demonstrations, practice, and feedback. The activities are written for a coach working closely with one to three participants.
Workshop	A facilitated group training strategy that fosters the development of skills through group interaction. These activities are written for up to 25 participants working in small or large groups with one or two trainers.
Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice	Activities assigned by the trainer immediately following the completion of the module to help participants review key information, practice skills, and examine their progress toward expected outcomes of the module.
Continuing Professional Development	Follow-up activities supporting continued staff development in the skills addressed in a particular training guide including: (1) Opportunities tailored to help the participant continue building on the skills learned in the training; and (2) Strategies to help the participant identify new skills through opportunities in such areas as higher education, credentialing, or community educational programs.

At A Glance

Modules	*Activity*	*Time**	*Materials*
Module 1: What Is Collaboration?	Activity 1-1: Understanding Collaboration (W)	60 minutes	Handouts 1, and 2, Labeled Newsprint, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 1-2: On the Road to Collaboration (W)	120 minutes	Handouts 3, 4, and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 1-3: Collaboration and Head Start (C)	90 minutes	Handouts 1, 3, 4, and 6, Labeled Newsprint, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
Module 2: Elements of Success	Activity 2-1: Successful Collaboratives (W)	75 minutes	Handouts 1, 2, and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 2-2: Effective Meetings (W)	90 minutes	Handouts 4, 5, 6, and 7, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 2-3: Preparing for Collaboration (C)	90 minutes	Handouts 2 and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 2-4: Effective Meeting Planning (C)	120 minutes	Handouts 4, 5, 6, and 7, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
Module 3: Challenges of Collaboration	Activity 3-1: The Challenge Can (W)	75 minutes	Handout 1, Empty Can, Index Cards, Labeled Newsprint, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-2: Managing Conflict (W)	75 minutes	Handouts 2 and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 3-3: Preparing for Collaboration's Challenges (C)	90 minutes	Handouts 1 and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = Workshop
(C) = Coaching

*Time may vary depending on the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's skill, and the flow of discussion.

Modules	Activity	Time*	Materials
Module 4: Practicing the Collaborative Process	Activity 4-1: Dream House (W)	120 minutes	Handouts 1, 2, and 3, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-2: Recruiting Partners (W)	140 minutes	Handouts 2, 4, and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-3: Starting a Collaboration (C)	90 minutes	Handouts 3, 4, and 5, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-4: Strategic Planning (W)	300 minutes	Handouts 6, 7, and 8, Newsprint, Markers, Tape
	Activity 4-5: Forming a Strategic Planning Team (C)	90 minutes	Handouts 6, 7, and 8, Newsprint, Markers, Tape

(W) = Workshop
(C) = Coaching

---

*Time may vary depending on the group size and experience level, the needs of the group, the trainer's skill, and the flow of discussion.

What Is Collaboration?

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Understand** the meaning and benefits of collaboration;
- **Recognize** the stages and milestones of the collaborative process; and
- **Assess** the need for collaborative partnerships in their community.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 1 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to define the collaborative process include:

- **Collaboration.** Collaboration is the most intense level of working together. It is a structure and a process for creating change. A collaborative effort is driven by partners who agree to share information, activities, resources, influence, power, and decision-making authority to achieve common goals—goals that no single partner or program could achieve by acting alone.

- **Community Partnerships.** The Performance Standards require local Head Start programs to engage, plan, and work with other organizations to improve, maximize, and share services, staff, information, and funds. Unmet family needs, tragic events, or environmental changes, such as diminishing resources at a time of increased demand for services, often spark a call for action and the development of community partnerships.

- **Benefits of Collaboration for Head Start Families.** Community-wide collaboration is essential to increase family/child access to needed supports and services, reduce confusion when assistance is needed from two or more agencies, and create environments where children and families can learn and thrive. Furthermore, collaboration involves and supports families in their efforts to make the community safer or more responsive to child and family interests and needs.

- **Benefits of Collaboration for Local Head Start Programs and Staff.** In addition to helping families and children succeed, collaboration is beneficial to Head Start programs and staff. Community partnerships offer avenues for conducting community assessments and program planning, initiating program self-assessments, managing resources, enhancing creativity in program design and service delivery, renewing staff energy and motivation, acquiring new viewpoints on complex issues and strategies for resolving them, reducing environmental risks, avoiding the duplication of services and resources, and having a voice in how the community provides support and services.

- **Organizational Levels of Collaboration.** All Head Start staff have a potential role in the development of community partnerships.

> Collaboration takes place at the governing and policy-making level within communities, at the management level among agencies, and at the direct-service level between providers as well as with the community at large.

Background Information

Community partnerships are exciting and dynamic structures that develop from the realization that programs and people can share resources and achieve more by working together. Through commitment, a willingness to compromise, and careful planning, partners are capable of making significant changes in the community.

Developmental Process

The formation of a collaborative is often a developmental process that begins with **communication and networking.** Program administrators, members of governing boards, managers, consumers, and/or direct service providers from different agencies come together to explore possibilities of working together. In this initial phase, partners exchange **information** and build rapport by sharing concerns, interests, and needs.

The next phase takes participants to **coordination and cooperation,** where **information and activities** are shared. Participants develop methods of working together that allow them to take advantage of each other's resources without substantially altering the way their programs operate or deliver services. For example, participants may decide to co-sponsor staff training events or health promotion campaigns. This phase usually does not require a change in program budgets or policies, but may require a change in program procedures.

When agency coordination and cooperation work well, the door to **collaboration** may open. Collaboration is different from cooperation and coordination in a significant way. In an effort where collaboration takes place, participants become partners and agree to share **information, activities, and resources** to achieve common goals. For example, local Head Start programs and school districts can collaborate by jointly hiring therapists to ensure smooth and appropriate transitions for children with disabilities and their families. Changes in the structure, policies, procedures, and budgets of the partners' programs are often necessary to carry out the goals of a collaborative effort.

Assessing Head Start's Readiness for Community Partnerships

Prior to engaging in a collaborative, Head Start programs must assess their readiness for participation in a community partnership. Some questions to help staff explore the possibilities, benefits, and challenges of community partnership, include:

- In your work with families, do you see any need to change the service system or conditions in the community? Do you see any need for a new service, program, or resource?

- What are your ideas for building a community partnership?

- How would the projected partnership benefit Head Start children and families?

- What challenges do you expect in developing, or being part of, a community partnership?

Stages and Milestones

Building a community partnership is hard work and demands a lot of patience. Collaborations move through four stages. Each stage has a set of milestones or benchmarks that allow collaborative partners know they are making progress. However, each partnership is unique, going through the stages and meeting the benchmarks in its own way and at its own speed.

- Stage One: Getting Together

  In this stage, a small group comes together to explore how to address an issue or need of mutual concern. Sometimes an event in the community, such as closing a public housing complex or a child's tragic death, brings people together. More typically, people come together due to shared frustrations over deteriorating neighborhood conditions or unmet service needs. Next, the group identifies and invites other community representatives who may have a stake in the same issue. In addition, initial ground rules for working together are also explored in this stage.

- Stage Two: Building Trust and Ownership

  Once potential partners are identified, attention turns to building trust and ownership by engaging partners, developing a base of common knowledge, and creating a shared vision of what needs to change. At this point, group members make a joint commitment to become partners and collaborate. They exchange information—as well as views on the issue or need—that brought them together. In addition, partners must revisit and revise the basic ground rules for working together and explore the resources needed for collaborative planning.

- Stage Three: Developing a Strategic Plan

  In this stage, partners develop a mission statement and conduct an assessment to determine whether the collaborative has the ability to accomplish its mission. This assessment involves: 1) obtaining more information relevant to the issue (e.g., political climate, other initiatives);

and, 2) identifying the strengths, needs, opportunities, and challenges of the collaboration.

If, after the assessment, the partners feel the collaborative has potential to succeed, they establish goals. If substantial discrepancies exist between the goals and the potential to achieve them, partners must reevaluate and rework them. This stage also involves developing strategies for achieving the goals by examining the various routes, analyzing the cost and benefits of each, and selecting the strategies that are most likely to work.

- Stage Four: Taking Action

  In this stage, partners begin to implement the strategies that define their strategic plan. Sometimes program policies and procedures need to be revised or modified in order to support the plan developed by the collaborative. Thus, if they are not already involved, partners must bring program administrators and members of governing bodies and policy groups who have policy-making authority to the table. Before going full scale with the initiative, partners may decide to implement a pilot project and assess the results.

Ongoing evaluation that helps partners monitor their work, making mid-course corrections, and measuring the results is an integral part of the collaborative process. Module 4 of this guide, *Practicing the Collaborative Process,* as well as other guides in the series, *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community,* offer guidance on evaluation. Finally, throughout all the stages, taking the time to reflect on and celebrate achievements—no matter how small—brings renewed energy and commitment to the partners.

Activity 1-1: Understanding Collaboration

Purpose: To clarify the meaning and benefits of collaboration.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Levels of Community Partnership*
- Handout 2: *Community Partnerships*
- Three sheets of newsprint labeled: "Child/Family Benefits," "Head Start Benefits," and "Personal Benefits."
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Warm up the group.* Present the purpose of the activity. Explain that individuals and organizations work together in many different ways. Ask participants to take turns describing one way they work together with a service provider or organization in the broader community. List responses on newsprint.

2. *Introduce the topic of collaboration.* Point out that collaboration is a popular buzz word today many people use to describe almost any form of working together, but collaboration has very specific meaning. Describe the concept of collaboration as a distinct process using the module's background information as a guide.

3. (a) *Discuss collaboration and the Performance Standards.* Explain that community partnerships are one of the many themes emphasized in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Refer the group to handout 1 and explain that community partnerships occur at different levels, ranging from interagency communication to collaboration; as one moves through the levels, the linkages or relationships between partners become stronger and more intense.

   (b) Refer to the examples of working together presented by the group in **step 1**. By show of hands, ask participants to indicate whether the examples of working together are communication and networking, coordination, cooperation, or collaboration. Address any uncertainties about the correct response.

   (c) Make sure the group understands that the focus of this training activity is collaboration, which is the most intense level of working together and involves the sharing of information, activities, and resources. Review the definition of collaboration, presented on handout 1. Ask participants to give details about any collaborative activities they are currently pursuing or participating in.

4. (a) *Conduct a large group discussion on collaborative possibilities and benefits.* Explain that the possibilities for collaborative activities are vast. Tape the three labeled sheets of newsprint to the wall.

(b) Refer the group to handout 2 and read the first scenario. Using the first scenario, explore the benefits of collaboration by encouraging participants to discuss how community partnerships are good for children and families, the Head Start program, and themselves. Give all participants an opportunity to respond. Record responses on the appropriate sheet of newsprint.

(c) Once the discussion has concluded, repeat the process with the remaining scenarios provided on handout 2. Make sure the benefits presented in the key concepts are covered in the group's responses.

5. *Close the activity.* Recap the activity's highlights and emphasize that collaboration makes possible what a single person or program could not do alone. Acknowledge that the collaborative process can be filled with many challenges. Make sure participants know that upcoming activities in this guide will address managing these challenges.

Activity 1-2: On the Road to Collaboration

Purpose: To recognize the stages and milestones of the collaborative process and to assess the Head Start community's need and readiness for community partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *Collaboration Stages and Milestones*
- Handout 4: *New Beginnings: One Community's Story*
- Handout 5: *Taking the First Steps*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the activity.* Present the purpose of the activity and make the following points:

   - A collaboration occurs between two or more partners.

   - In a collaborative, the process of working together must be flexible and adjust to new information or circumstances, while staying focused on goals.

   - Changing community conditions or ways of doing business require a process powerful enough to overcome multiple layers of resistance —in attitudes, relationships, and policies—within and across agencies and groups.

   - Collaborative partners must find the most efficient and effective way to knit their needs, resources, and interests into a purposeful and unique plan.

2. *Present a framework for building a collaboration.* Refer the group to handout 3 and, using the background information as a guide, review the stages and milestones of collaboration. Emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation throughout the stages of collaboration. Ask participants to give examples of the stages and milestones, based on their experiences with developing or participating in a community partnership.

3. (a) *Initiate a small group exercise on collaboration's stages and milestones.* Explain that in the upcoming activity participants will take a look at one community's collaboration-building experience; the exercise is intended to help participants recognize the stages and milestones of a community partnership. Refer the group to handout 4, which provides a profile on an actual partnership called New Beginnings. Point out that New Beginnings is a collaborative focused on widespread change in the community's service system; collaboratives, however, can be much smaller in scope.

   (b) Divide the large group into two small groups. Make sure each group appoints a facilitator and a recorder/reporter, and has sheets of newsprint, markers, and tape. Assign groups the following:

   - Identify the activities that show the milestones and stages of New Beginnings' progress and development.

   Allow the groups 30 minutes to complete their work.

4. (a) *Debrief the small group exercise.* Reconvene the large group. Ask for reports from the small groups on New Beginnings' stages and milestones.

   (b) Recording responses on newsprint, raise the following questions to help the group make connections between New Beginnings and their community:

   - What did you find most significant about the story?
   - What parts of the story would you like to see happen in your community?
   - What role do you see Head Start, or yourself, having in a collaboration to improve community services for families?

5. (a) *Prepare to assess Head Start's readiness for collaboration.* Point out that prior to engaging in a collaborative, Head Start programs should assess their readiness for participation in a community partnership; this requires looking at tough questions on how well their Head Start program is doing in its support of children and families and how it can improve.

(b) Present the format for a large group discussion. Refer the group to handout 5.

(c) Emphasize that you expect a lot of different viewpoints and opinions to come out during the discussion and that you are not looking for any set answers. Ask for a volunteer to record discussion highlights on sheets of newsprint.

6. (a) *Facilitate a group assessment of Head Start's readiness.* Lead the group through the first set of questions on handout 5. Do not rush the group through the questions; instead, allow plenty of time for the group to reflect and respond. Manage the discussion process so everyone feels acknowledged and heard.

   (b) Repeat the process presented above for the second and third set of questions on handout 5.

7. *Close the activity.* Present the themes of the group discussion. Acknowledge that collaboratives require a lot of time and hard work; however, when partners make a commitment to see an initiative through all of its stages and milestones, many positive and exciting changes can occur.

Activity 1-3: Collaboration and Head Start

Purpose: To encourage development of community partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Levels of Community Partnership*
- Handout 3: *Collaboration Stages and Milestones*
- Handout 4: *New Beginnings: One Community's Story*
- Handout 6: *Where Do We Stand?*
- Three sheets of newsprint labeled: "Child/Family Benefits," "Head Start Benefits," and "Personal Benefits."
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the coaching activity.* Explain the purpose of the coaching session. Note that the Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to collaborate and form community partnerships. Ask participants to give examples of how they work together with community organizations, groups, or leaders.

2. (a) *Explore the development of community partnerships.* Refer participants to handout 1. Make sure they understand the differences between the illustrated levels. Discuss where the examples provided in **step 1** fit on the handout. Point out how the linkages or relationships

become stronger and more intense moving from communication to collaboration. (See the background information section of this module for details.)

(b) Provide an overview of the stages and milestones of collaboration. Refer participants to handout 3. Next, encourage participants to describe their experiences with collaboratives. Based on handout 3, ask participants to reflect on the process used. Emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation at each stage of collaboration.

3. *Present a model of a community partnership.* Point out that many communities are succeeding in improving services for children and families through collaborative efforts. Refer participants to handout 4 and ask them to read it. Next, encourage participants to share their reactions and to discuss what it would take to establish a New Beginnings in their community. Make sure to point out the stages and milestones of this collaboration.

4. *Identify the benefits of collaboration.* Tape up the three sheets of newsprint, labeled "Child/Family Benefits," "Head Start Benefits," and "Personal Benefits." Ask participants to give you examples from handout 4 on the benefits of community partnership. Record responses on newsprint. Make sure the benefits of collaboration presented in the key concepts are included in the examples.

5. (a) *Prepare participants for a homework assignment on community partnerships.* Refer participants to handout 6 and review the instructions. Explain that you want them to complete the handout as homework.

Coach Preparation Note: Suggest that participants start the assignment by recording the ways in which they or their Head Start program have formed partnerships with community organizations. Instruct participants to follow up the self-reflection by interviewing other staff members. If more than one staff member is participating in the coaching activity, suggest that participants conduct interviews as a group or that they divide up the assignment so that no single staff member is interviewed more then once.

(b) To make sure participants understand the assignment, review the example provided in handout 6. Allow participants two weeks to complete the assignment. Set up a time for debriefing the homework.

6. (a) *Debrief the homework assignment.* Encourage participants to give you some general feedback on the homework assignment. Then, ask participants to answer the question posed in the title of handout 6, "Where do we stand?" Ask participants to present examples of community partnerships from the homework assignment.

(b) Review the completed handout with participants. Encourage participants to analyze the information by asking:

- At what level of working together is your Head Start program? Communication and networking? Coordination and cooperation? Collaboration? *(Explore the reasons for their responses.)*
- Where do community partnerships appear to be the strongest? With which organizations? What kinds of activities are occurring with these organizations?
- Where do community partnerships appear to be most needed? With whom? Why? How would you initiate a partnership?
- Is your Head Start program ready to collaborate? Expand on collaborative efforts? What are some collaborative possibilities? *(Explore the reasons for their responses.)*
- What kinds of community partnerships would you like to be part of? What can you do to encourage their development? What challenges do you expect along the way? *(Explore the reasons for their responses.)*

7. *Close the activity.* Emphasize the following points:

- Collaboration is a distinct way of working together.
- Collaboration is often a developmental process. Working collaboratively with other organizations to improve services for children and families involves hard work, but it also brings rewards.
- The Head Start Program Performance Standards offer a challenge and an opportunity for staff to be part of exciting changes in the way Head Start and community organizations do business.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 1 are presented below. After completing Module 1, review the strategies with Head Start staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Working With Others in Your Community**

  Take a close look at what you're trying to achieve in your job. Review your work activities over the past two to three months. Identify the activities that may have been easier to do or more successful if you had stronger working relationships with staff members of other agencies or organizations. Choose one or two possible partners and invite the staff members to have lunch with you or to take part in an upcoming activity at Head Start. Explore possibilities for working together.

- **Taking an Inventory of Collaborative Initiatives**

  Find out about collaborative initiatives underway in your community that may already address one or more of your concerns regarding community conditions or the unmet needs of children and families. Start by asking co-workers, colleagues in other agencies, and community leaders about initiatives they know of. Next, contact local child and family service agencies, community action groups, charitable organizations, and other appropriate agencies to find out what they are doing. If you uncover collaborative initiatives relevant to your concerns, find out more about who is involved, what populations or neighborhoods they are targeting, and their missions, goals, and strategies. Present your findings to members of the Head Start community (policy-makers, staff, volunteers, and parents) and explore the interest and possibilities for Head Start to become part of the existing collaborative initiatives.

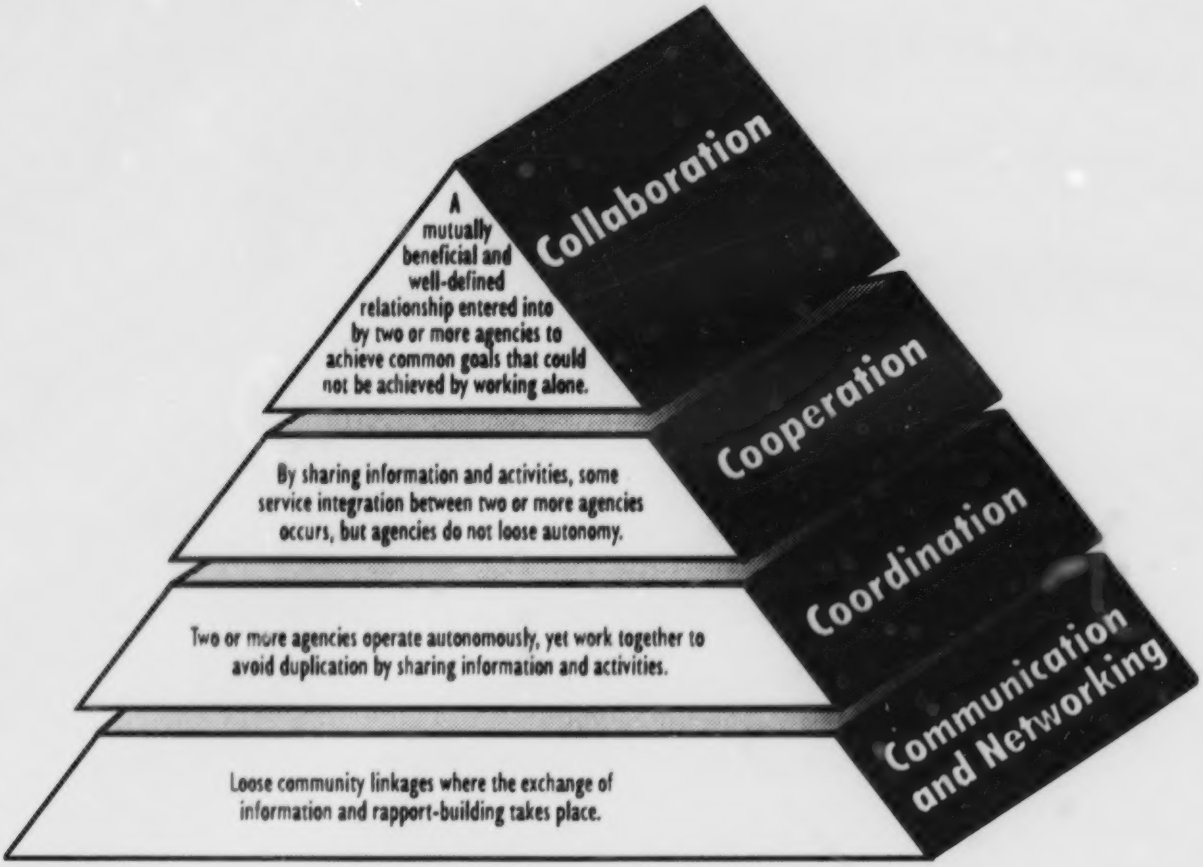
- **Exploring Possibilities for Collaborative Partnerships**

  Use the outcome of the assessments, conducted in Activity 1-2 and/or Activity 1-3, to develop a brief report on a collaborative effort you would like to initiate or be involved in. In the report, describe the need or concern, as you see it, as well as how you believe the collaborative effort would benefit Head Start children and families, the Head Start program, and Head Start staff. Include a list of potential partners in the collaborative effort. Outline the steps you are willing to take to get the effort started. Present the paper and your ideas to your supervisor and co-workers.

Handout 1: Levels of Community Partnership[1]

Overview

The illustration below shows the increasing intensity of community partnerships as they move from the communication and networking level to the collaboration level.



A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more agencies to achieve common goals that could not be achieved by working alone.

By sharing information and activities, some service integration between two or more agencies occurs, but agencies do not loose autonomy.

Two or more agencies operate autonomously, yet work together to avoid duplication by sharing information and activities.

Loose community linkages where the exchange of information and rapport-building takes place.

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[1] Adapted from Wisconsin Department of Public Information and Great Lakes Resource Access Project, *Collaboration: Because It's Good for Children and Families* (Portage, Wisc.: Wisconsin Department of Public Information and Great Lakes Resource Access Project, 1994).

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Handout 2: Community Partnerships

__Overview__
Many local Head Start programs are already on the road to collaboration. Below are some examples of community partnerships.

- **Troubleshooting Partners!**

  Partners: King County Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, Washington State Child-Care Subsidy Program, Employment Security Office, WorkFirst (state welfare program), and state policy-makers.
  Mission: To troubleshoot when families have difficulty maneuvering the service system.

  Head Start families in King County, Washington continued to get "lost in the system"; the fragmented system failed to support low-income families because many agencies lacked the knowledge and expertise needed to refer families to the appropriate resources. To rectify this situation, the partners collaborated to create a coordinated referral system. In this community partnership, each partner received cross training in order to increase their knowledge of other agencies. Throughout this cross training, staff were able to build rapport and identify people to contact within each organization. In addition to cross-training, the agencies have created a one-stop referral policy. Now, when families seek assistance, they only need to go to one staff person, who is prepared to dispense all of the information the family may need.

- **Collaboration to Ease Increased Demand**

  Partners: Lake Erie Head Start, family day-care providers, and New York State Child-Care Subsidy Program.
  Mission: To provide high-quality Head Start services to all eligible children.

  Because of the growing number of families requiring child-care, the Lake Erie Head Start program collaborates with local family day-care providers, and the child-care subsidy program to ensure that all eligible children receive comprehensive Head Start services. Family day-care providers are reimbursed the full-day child-care subsidy from the state when they agree to provide an educational program that meets the philosophy and standards of Head Start. Head Start, in turn, brings its staff development and training capabilities to the partnership. Head Start also works to create a high-quality learning environment by providing materials to the family day-care provider. Because of this collaboration, all children enrolled in the participating family day-care home benefit by receiving Head Start services.

- **Collaborating for Full-Day Services**

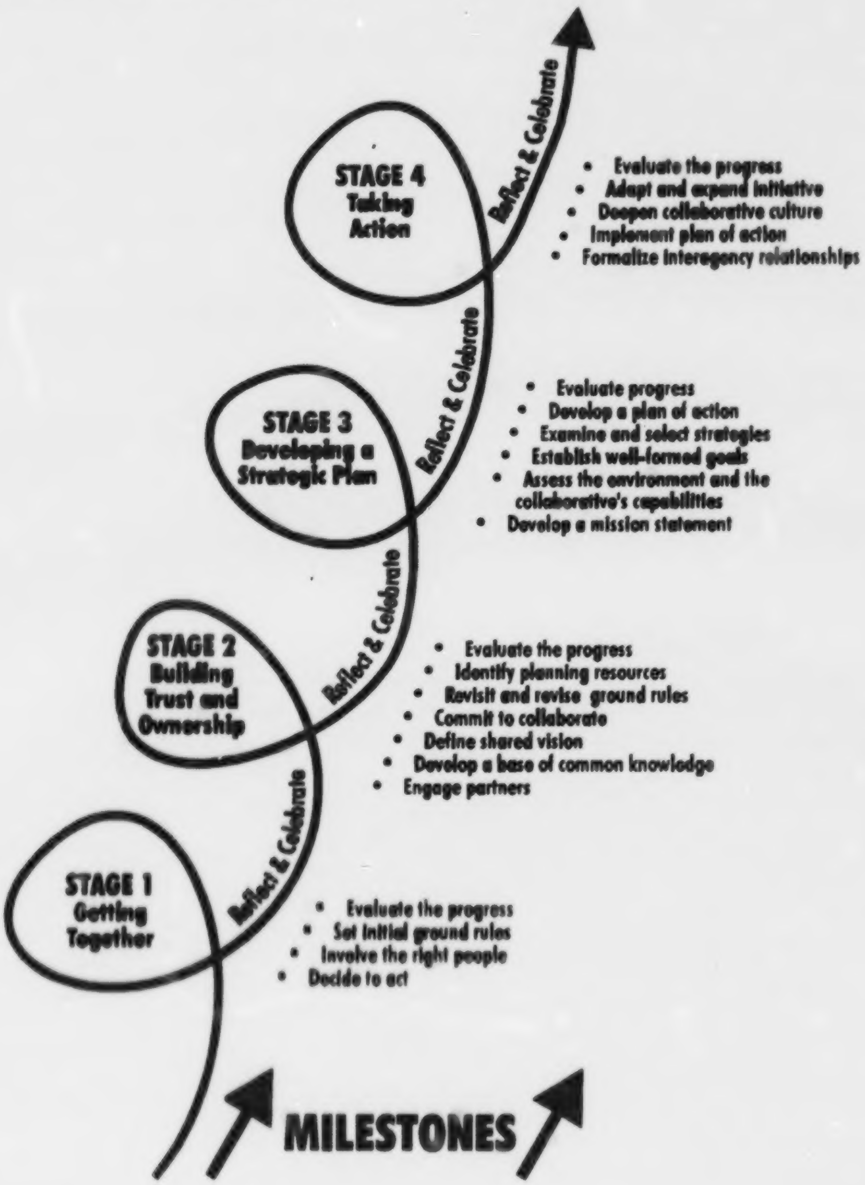
  Partners: Chugiak Children's Services, local schools, health clinics, and community organizations.
  Mission: To increase services to children and families through shared resources.

  Chugiak Children's Services sought additional funding to enhance its ability to provide high-quality comprehensive services for children and families. Year after year, grants were awarded to community organizations that duplicate existing services. Yet, none of the agencies was able to provide the comprehensive services that the families needed. Thus, Chugiak Children's Services formed a collaborative with other community organizations, schools, and local clinics. The collaborative applied for and received joint funding to combine program services. As a result, the collaborative is able to provide a complete continuum of services to children and families in the community.

Handout 3: Collaboration Stages and Milestones[2]

Overview

The stages of collaboration do not follow a straight course. Instead, as illustrated below, stages may loop back, repeat themselves, or overlap.


STAGE 4
Taking Action
Reflect & Celebrate
STAGE 3
Developing a Strategic Plan
Reflect & Celebrate
STAGE 2
Building Trust and Ownership
Reflect & Celebrate
STAGE 1
Getting Together
Reflect & Celebrate
MILESTONES

- Evaluate the progress
- Adapt and expand initiative
- Deepen collaborative culture
- Implement plan of action
- Formalize interagency relationships

- Evaluate progress
- Develop a plan of action
- Examine and select strategies
- Establish well-formed goals
- Assess the environment and the collaborative's capabilities
- Develop a mission statement

- Evaluate the progress
- Identify planning resources
- Revisit and revise ground rules
- Commit to collaborate
- Define shared vision
- Develop a base of common knowledge
- Engage partners

- Evaluate the progress
- Set initial ground rules
- Involve the right people
- Decide to act

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[2] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

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Handout 4: New Beginnings: One Community's Story[3]

Instructions
The exercise is intended to help you recognize the stages and milestones of an effective community partnership. The passage below provides a profile on an actual partnership. In small groups, take a close look at this community's collaboration-building experiences by discussing New Beginnings' development and progress.

Getting Together
The collaborative began with a telephone call. Richard Jacobsen, then director of the county Department of Social Services, called Tom Payzant, superintendent of the San Diego City Schools. Jacobsen explained that the Department of Social Services and a few county colleagues had been talking about the need to address the range of family problems collaboratively.

That conversation lead to the initial 1988 meeting of 26 high-ranking public officials from four county offices. They represented the city of San Diego, San Diego County, the San Diego City Schools, and the San Diego Community College District. They all faced shrinking budgets and growing demand, but were responsible for only a piece of each family's services. They agreed that the fragmented approach just was not working. Something entirely different was needed.

Building Trust and Ownership
At that initial meeting, Jacobsen paid attention to seemingly details such as providing lunch and time to get to know one another. Before the group disbanded, it lined up for a group photograph. Jacobsen later sent copies to all the participants. These small gestures set the tone for a possible partnership.

Shortly thereafter, the four agencies agreed to collaborate in order to develop a system that puts family needs before paperwork. The result was New Beginnings. No minimum financial contribution was required. However, each partner pledged, through a governance agreement, to contribute whatever they could in staff time, supplies, and services. Throughout the process, New Beginnings relied on grants from various foundations for startup costs.

Each agency's top executive committed to stay personally involved. Though top-level involvement was key, the group agreed that staff at all levels of the agencies had to be involved, as well. The conveners decided to invite the San Diego Housing Commission, San Diego School of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego Children's Hospital and Health Center, and the IBM Corporation to join the effort.

The nuts and bolts work of the new collaborative was driven by the New Beginnings Council, a group of mid- and high-level staff from each agency. Decisions were arrived at not through majority rule, but through consensus. Elected officials were not forgotten. Though the partners agreed to buffer the new collaborative from the political fray, they were careful to keep their elected officials aware of their work.

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[3] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 4: New Beginnings: One Community's Story (continued)

Developing a Strategic Plan

After two years of talking, the collaborative began to put in place the underpinnings for action. Working from the shared vision, the collaborative created a mission statement: "a tearing down of barriers, a giving up of turf, and a new way of doing business in order to help families." The collaborative talked about goals. It aimed to improve health, social and emotional well-being, and school achievement of children; self-sufficiency and parental involvement in families; and unity among institutions.

When it came to actually attempting such change, however, the collaborative needed help. The Stuart Foundation offered the consulting skills of Sidney Gardner, an expert on collaboration. Gardner asked the hard questions on issues such as target group selection, confidentiality, common eligibility, and funding that helped to push the collaborative ahead. Eventually, the collaborative decided to develop a preventive program targeted at elementary school children and their families. They went on to study the feasibility of providing services from many agencies at or near a school site. All the partners agreed to make in-kind contributions to offset the cost of the $217,000 study.

The study documented a key assumption of the partners. By sharing their databases, with information coded to protect families' privacy, the partners discovered just how many clients they had in common. Most importantly, the study provided a basis for reallocating existing dollars.

The partners agreed that to make the service system family centered, they needed to align smaller units of workers with specific neighborhoods. These workers would remain in their home agencies but comprise an extended team collaborating with agency workers and others in the field.

Taking Action

In September 1991, after three years of planning, the partners opened New Beginnings Center for Children and Families, where representatives from a score of agencies act as family service advocates; broker public services; and provide some direct services such as immunizations, school registration, and counseling. Instead of working side-by-side, they work together.

Perhaps the greatest challenge was building a team. After months of working together, the potential of the partnership slowly began to become apparent. Resource teacher Sally Skartvedt says, "As we get to know each other, we feel more confidence and trust in each other and respect for each other." Full scale implementation of the mission required detailed interagency agreements spelling out workers' roles and the information they are able to share.

New Beginnings also took on the issue of confidentiality. The group discovered that procedures, not law, are the major barrier to information-sharing. To overcome these obstacles, the collaborative planned to provide additional training to staff. The collaborative also developed a release form that families would sign to allow the sharing of confidential information among the partner agencies.

The Result

Silvia Gonzalez's daughter, Liliana, was getting ready to leave Head Start and begin kindergarten at Hamilton Elementary in inner-city San Diego. Silvia wanted to sign up Liliana for the free lunch program. However, she was not looking forward to filling out another application. Then one day, a letter came in the mail. Because Silvia was already in the food stamp program, the letter read, her children were automatically eligible for free school lunches. The letter was one tangible sign of New Beginnings' effort to remake San Diego's education and human service bureaucracies.

Handout 5: Taking the First Steps[4]

Instructions
You can take the first steps toward improving services for Head Start children and families by expressing your views and opinions about the questions presented below.

I. How Are We Doing on Our Own?

1. Are the lives of the children and families we serve improving? If not, why?

2. Are we achieving our program's mission? If not, why?

3. Are our Head Start services for children and families comprehensive?
    a. Do we work in partnership with families?
    b. Do we, as staff working with the same families and children, communicate often enough?
    c. Do we measure the impact of our services, or do we simply total the number of services we provide?
    d. Do we offer preventive supports and services to help our children and families avoid more serious problems?

4. How well are we connected with other agencies offering services and resources that our children and families need?
    a. Do we have good working relationships with our colleagues in other agencies?
    b. When we refer our families to community agencies do we have follow-up conversations with the service providers?

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[4] Adapted from The Education and Human Services Consortium, *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families with Comprehensive Services* (Washington, D.C.: The Education and Human Services Consortium, c/o Institute for Educational Leadership, 1992).

Handout 5: Taking the First Steps (continued)

II. Do We Need to Change?

1. How effective will we be in 10 years if the needs of Head Start families continue to change and we continue to do business as usual?

2. What resource or other limitations do we face in improving our services and supports for families?

3. How might closer relationships with other organizations and community leaders help us improve services for the children and families we serve?

4. What are we trying to accomplish? What do we need to change?

III. How Ready Are We for Community Partnerships?

1. What is the history of collaboration in our program, neighborhood, community, and county? What lessons can we learn from past experiences, or the lack of them?

2. What do we know about other organizations' current needs and priorities that might encourage them to discuss common concerns and potential solutions with us?

3. Do we have relationships with community leaders who might be willing to assist us in a collaborative effort?

5. What are we willing to pay in terms of program dollars and staff time to build collaborative partnerships on behalf of Head Start children and families?

Handout 6: Where Do We Stand?

Instructions

Complete the chart by noting examples of how your Head Start program works with organizations in your community. Base your information on personal knowledge and staff interviews or conversations. Indicate the level of community partnership each activity suggests by checking it off as being at:

- *Level 1: Communication and Networking (the sharing of information);*
- *Level 2: Cooperation and Coordination (the sharing of information and activities); or*
- *Level 3: Collaboration (the sharing of information, activities, and resources.)*

ORGANIZATION 1: Health Care Providers *(clinics, physicians, dentists, and other providers)*

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1. Local Health Clinic comes to Head Start Center to provide children and families with free immunizations.		✓	
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 2: Mental Health Providers

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 3: Employment Opportunity Providers

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

Handout 6: Where Do We Stand? (continued)

ORGANIZATION 4: Providers of Services to Children with Disabilities

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 5: Family Preservation and Family Support Providers

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 6: Public Service Providers *(child protective services, police departments, recreation facilities, or public transportation agencies)*

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

Handout 6: Where Do We Stand? (continued)

ORGANIZATION 7: Local Schools and Educational Institutions *(schools, libraries, and museums)*

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 8: Providers of Child-Care Services

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

ORGANIZATION 9: Businesses and/or Other Organizations

Activities	*Level 1*	*Level 2*	*Level 3*
1.			
2.			
3.			

Elements of Success

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will:

- **Recognize** the elements that contribute to a successful collaboration;
- **Practice** shared decision-making;
- **Hold** effective meetings; and
- **Assume** an active role on a planning team.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 2 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to succeed in the collaborative process include:

- **Elements of Successful Collaboration.** Collaboration requires much more than merely a decision to work together. It requires a unique purpose, attainable goals, distinct and structured membership, continuous communication and dialogue, and shared resources.
- **Decision-Making.** Successful collaborations require partners to share decision-making authority; instead of decisions made from above, a collaboration involves partners who take equal responsibility for making the decisions necessary to achieve a common goal.
- **Effective Meetings.** Effective meetings enhance a collaborative's ability to succeed because they bring commitment, motivation, and energy to collaborative partners. While there is no universal definition of an "effective meeting," certain strategies can increase the meeting's effectiveness, including establishing ground rules, choosing a skilled facilitator, involving everyone, and deciding on the roles of partners.
- **Partner Roles in Meetings.** In a collaborative, all partners must have a role that uses their unique talents and interests. Meeting roles help define how partners relate and work with each other; they are a way of giving authority to act and of getting the work done efficiently. Partner roles may overlap, be shared, or rotate over the course of the collaborative process. Roles may include facilitator, notetaker, information gatherer, monitor, and celebration organizer.

Background Information

Successful collaboration requires much more than merely a decision to work together. It involves applying the elements of successful collaboration, assuming active partner roles, holding effective meetings, and using shared decision-making authority.

Elements of a Successful Collaboration

While many community partnerships are successful, many others collapse. Partners can enhance a collaborative's chance to succeed by practicing certain elements. Elements contributing to success include:

- **Unique purpose.** The purpose of the collaborative must be different from—but connected to—the individual missions of participating organizations. To keep focused, partners should continually ask and answer the question, "What do we want to achieve?" Each time a new member joins the group, the purpose of the collaborative should be revisited and, if needed, revised.

- **Attainable goals.** Goals must be clearly defined, achievable, measurable, and realistic. Having no way of knowing when goals are achieved or a lack of commitment to the goals are often causes of collaborative breakdown. Once goals are reached, partners should celebrate and move on to other efforts.

- **Distinct and structured membership.** A carefully selected membership and defined process enhances the collaborative's ability to succeed. All community partnerships should strive to have:

  — *Skilled leadership.* Collaborative groups need a leader or facilitator who can provide structure, keep partners motivated, encourage compromise (when necessary), build consensus, communicate effectively, and remain neutral.

  — *Diverse partners.* Involving a variety of consumers and people who represent the richness of the community, is vital for creating energy, new perspectives, and a climate of community ownership.

  — *A strength-based effort.* All partners bring strengths to the collaborative effort, which must be acknowledged in ways that make each partner feel respected and valued.

  — *Realistic and clear expectations.* Roles, responsibilities, and the time required of individual partners must be defined, with the workload shared and divided into manageable portions among partners.

  — *Committed and accountable members.* Commitment to a collaborative effort is much more than attending meetings; it is doing everything possible to make the effort work. Community partners are responsible for achieving specific results; evaluation of the outcomes is central to accountability.

- **Continuous communication and dialogue.** Honest talk about individual concerns, self-interests, experiences of working together in the past, current conflicts, and the risks of sharing power and resources is essential for building a sense of mutual trust and respect among partners. Partners also need to feel they can make recommendations for change. If partners do not feel it is safe to speak openly, they are more likely to make recommendations that aim at cooperation and coordination, but fall short of true collaboration.

- **Shared resources.** Planning and carrying out a collaborative effort requires sufficient resources. Partners must share responsibility for obtaining needed funds, which may require revising individual program budgets, grant writing, and fund-raising campaigns. Agencies must provide incentives for staff participating in the effort, such as relief from other duties or compensatory pay.

Decision-Making

How decisions are made is often a major cause of confusion and frustration among collaborative partners. Decisions are typically made in one of the following ways:

- **Individual decision.** One person, normally the team leader or program manager, actually makes decisions for the team.

- **Minority decision.** A few team members meet to consider the matter and then make a decision; that decision is binding for everyone.

- **Majority decision.** More than half of the members of the team make the decision and it is binding for all concerned. (Many political and democratic organizations use this decision-making process.)

- **Consensus decision.** The entire team considers the matter, with each member expressing a view and offering ideas. The team reaches a decision through compromise accepted by all members, regardless of how satisfied they are with it. (No majority rule voting is allowed.)

- **Unanimous decision.** The entire team considers the matter. All team members fully agree with the action to be taken and all fully subscribe to the decision that is made.

When people are involved in making a decision, they are much more likely to be committed to that decision than when one person or a small group makes a decision on their behalf. Therefore, moving from individual decision-making to unanimous decisions increases commitment. However, this also increases the difficulty people have in arriving at agreement. Collaborations require shared decision-making authority; instead of decisions coming from above, a collaboration involves partners who take responsibility for decisions to achieve a common goal.

Holding Effective Meetings

Effective meetings enhance a collaborative's ability to succeed because they bring commitment, motivation, and energy to collaborative partners. While there is no universal definition of an "effective meeting," certain strategies can increase the meeting's effectiveness. In this module, participants examine ways for collaborative partners to:

- Establish Ground Rules

  An effective meeting requires all partners to contribute to and have a stake in the process. Ground rules help to ensure that 1) meeting time is spent wisely; 2) leadership for the collaborative is shared; 3) partners head in the same direction; and 4) conflicts are resolved. By establishing ground rules, partners also develop a stronger stake in the collaboration.

  When participants know what to expect, it encourages participation and increases motivation. Some ground rules may include:

  — Starting and ending meetings on time;
  — Providing background materials;
  — Having a set agenda distributed prior to the meeting;
  — No one talks twice before everyone talks once;
  — There are no wrong answers;
  — Time limits on discussion of agenda items; and
  — Keeping notes and documenting actions.

  Ground rules are unique to each collaborative and are open to change as the collaborative changes. New or different ground rules may be necessary to divide tasks more efficiently, take advantage of partner expertise, improve the flow of communication, establish committees, form a governance structure, and so on. Handout 6 serves as a resource for helping collaboratives establish ground rules.

- Choose a Skilled Facilitator

  A skilled meeting facilitator performs a number of important functions, including preparing for meetings, making sure the agenda goes according to plan, staying on top of group dynamics, and getting information to partners.

  While there is a tendency for initiators of a collaborative effort to move automatically into the role of facilitator, this may not be the best option. Initiators are likely to have some strong views about the direction they want the collaborative to take. Facilitators, on the other hand, must be able to take a neutral or impartial stance on issues and decisions facing the collaborative. Not taking sides encourages open dialogue and everyone's involvement during meetings.

- Involve Everyone

  Meetings work when everyone is involved. While it is the facilitator's primary job to see that everyone is involved through the way he/she handles meeting preparations and information-sharing, the job is not limited to the facilitator. It is the responsibility of each partner to become involved in the process and to encourage others to participate. Handout 5 provides strategies for increasing partner involvement.

- Decide on Roles of Partners

  Effective meetings require that partners take on one or more roles. Roles help to clarify and reinforce the contributions of each partner, particularly when there is a good match between the role and the partner's interests and strengths. Some roles include:

  — *Information gatherer.* The person who obtains the information needed to make informed decisions, such as data on the community's population, community assessment findings, baseline data, descriptions of exemplary programs, and governmental regulations.

  — *Monitor.* The person who tracks the collaborative's progress by monitoring the partners' planning activities, plan of action, and results.

  — *Celebration organizer.* The person who brings the partners' attention to collaborative victories and accomplishments by encouraging time for reflection, celebration, and special recognition of individual partners.

  — *Notetaker.* The person who prepares meeting summaries that briefly state who attended, the key issues discussed, the actions taken, partner assignments, and the main agenda items for the next meeting.

  — *Conflict resolver.* The person who brings conflicts among partners or organizations to the surface during meetings so they can be resolved according to the collaborative's ground rules.

  Meeting roles often overlap or are shared by partners; they can also be rotated to re-energize the collaborative. If partners feel stuck in a role that is too burdensome or not of interest to them, they are likely to drop out. Thus, it is important for partners to take a look at their role periodically and to be open to exchanging roles.

Instructions

As you prepare for this module's training, you may find it helpful to review the *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community*, particularly the management series. This series offers activities on enhancing team relationships and collaborative leadership skills.

Module 2

Activity 2-1: Successful Collaboratives

Purpose: To provide a framework for the development of successful community partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Kids Place: A Community Partnership Model*
- Handout 2: *Elements of Successful Collaborations*
- Handout 3: *The Decision-Making Scale*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Initiate a warm-up exercise.* Present the purpose of the activity. Explain that in the upcoming exercise, participants will look at one community's collaboration.

   (b) Refer participants to handout 1 and ask participants to choose a partner. Instruct pairs to read the profile and identify the elements that contributed to the success of Kids Place.

2. *Debrief the warm-up exercise.* Reconvene the large group and ask for pairs to report their findings. Encourage discussion by asking:

   - What contributed to the success of Kids Place?

   - Do you see a need for a Kids Place in our community?

3. *Examine the elements contributing to collaborative success.* Explain that a number of elements influence the success of a community partnership. Refer participants to handout 2 and go over each element, using the modules' background information to build on the information provided in the handout. Ask participants to apply the elements to the Kids Place profile by asking:

   - Which of these elements are part of Kids Place? How did they affect the collaborative's efforts?

   - What would it take to make a Kids Place a reality in our community?

4. (a) *Explore the decision-making scale.* Explain that decision-making is key to a collaborative's success. Ask participants to think for a minute or two about the way decisions are usually made on teams they are members of. Present the following examples for consideration:

   - Our team leader/manager usually decides, and the issue is settled;
   - Everyone has a chance to have their say, but our team leader/manager always has the "final say";
   - A small clique runs and dominates our team;

- When a decision must be made, a few of us get together and take care of it;
- We frequently let the majority rule;
- We don't make a decision until every member of our team completely agrees with it;
- We listen to everyone's views and try to include something for everyone in our final decision;
- We don't make a decision until most of us agree; or
- We don't make a decision until most of us can accept it to some extent.

(b) Encourage each participant to tell you about a team decision-making experience and its outcomes.

(c) Refer the group to handout 3. Review the five decision-making processes and encourage participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.

5. *Close the activity.* Compliment the group for its hard work and contributions to the workshop. Recap the activity by emphasizing the following points:

- A number of elements contribute to the success of the collaborative process.

- Successful community partnerships call for a unique purpose, attainable goals, a distinct and structured membership, continuous communication and dialogue, and shared resources.

- How decisions are made can also have a significant impact on a collaboration; experience shows that partners usually abandon a collaborative effort when they feel they have no voice in decisions.

- In a successful collaborative effort, decision-making is shared equally by the partners; while collaborative organizers may have a plan in mind for a collaboration, they must be prepared to back away and allow the collaborative process determine the action.

- Consensus may not always be possible. Instead of letting the lack of consensus stop the group's work, partners can agree to disagree and move on or seek another solution.

Activity 2-2: Effective Meetings

Purpose: To teach methods for holding effective meetings.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 4: *Choosing a Skilled Facilitator*
- Handout 5: *Involving Everyone*
- Handout 6: *Setting Ground Rules*
- Handout 7: *Meeting Agenda and Summary*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Define effective meetings.* Present the purpose of the activity. Point out that a successful collaborative involves conducting effective meetings. Ask participants to think for a minute or two about the meetings they routinely attend at work, at church, or at their child's school.

(b) Display the following questions as headings on separate sheets of newsprint and ask the group to call out responses, based on their experiences.

- What makes a meeting good?

- What makes a meeting terrible?

2. (a) *Provide a practice exercise.* Ask for five to eight volunteers to come forward and do an impromptu skit of a terrible meeting. Suggest that the volunteers choose three or more criteria from the newsprint list to illustrate in the skit. Give the volunteers about five minutes to prepare and ten minutes to present the skit.

(b) After the skit, ask observers to identify things to fix or change to make the role play meeting effective. Include these suggestions on the newsprint labeled, "What makes a meeting good?"

(c) Review with participants the module's background information on **Holding Effective Meetings**. Summarize the group's definition of effective meetings by reviewing responses to the first question in **step 1(b)** above.

3. *Examine criteria for choosing a meeting facilitator.* Point out that a skilled facilitator is a critical ingredient of an effective meeting. Review handout 4 with the group. Stress that facilitators must be able to involve everyone in meetings, know when and how to intervene at critical meeting moments, and remain neutral. Emphasize that when choosing a facilitator, it is important to look for the qualities or skills listed on the handout.

4. (a) *Discuss ways that collaborative partners can contribute to effective meetings.* Explain that all collaborative partners have a role in making meetings effective; the facilitators can not do the job alone. Ask participants to think for a minute or two about the tasks they might take on to assist or support a facilitator; for example, sending out meeting notices or drawing quiet partners into discussions. Encourage participants to consider their strengths, interests, and preferences as they think about the tasks. Ask participants to identify a task they would be willing to take on. Record responses on a sheet of newsprint.

(b) Next, ask the group to call out ways to involve partners in the tasks identified in step 4(a). Record strategies on newsprint. Distribute and review handout 5. Compare the newsprint responses to the strategies on the handout.

5. *Examine ground rules.* Explain that ground rules also contribute greatly to the effectiveness of meetings; one of the first tasks of collaborative partners is to decide how they will participate, set agendas, make decisions, communicate, and resolve conflicts. Distribute and review handout 6. Encourage the group to come up with other ground rule questions to add to the handout.

6. *Close the activity.* Quickly summarize the topics covered during the activity. Recommend handout 7 as a tool collaboratives may find helpful when planning upcoming meetings.

Activity 2-3: Preparing for Collaboration

Purpose: To assess the elements of successful community partnerships.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Elements of Successful Collaborations*
- Handout 3: *The Decision-Making Scale*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Initiate a warm-up discussion.* Ask participants to pretend for a minute or two that they have a magic wand, which they can wave to improve services for Head Start children and families. Then, raise the question: "What would you have your magic wand do or change?" After listing the responses to the question on newsprint, explain that community partnerships can be like magic wands—they can make what seems to be the impossible come true. Choose one of the newsprint responses and ask:

    - What would make this community partnership succeed? *(Probe for a unique purpose, attainable goals, distinct ad structured membership, continuous communication and dialogue, and shared resources.)*

2. *Examine the elements contributing to collaborative success.* Explain that a number of elements influence the success of a community partnership. Refer participants to handout 2 and go over each set of elements, using the modules' background information to build on the information provided in the handout.

3. (a) *Assign homework.* For homework, instruct participants to assess a past experience with a collaborative. Ask participants to consider:

   - What was the purpose of the collaborative effort?
   - Did the collaborative succeed? Why or why not?
   - Which elements on handout 2 were part of the collaborative?

> **Coach Preparation Note:** If participants have no collaboration experiences, suggest they meet with someone in the Head Start (or broader) community and discuss his/her experience.

   (b) Allow two weeks for participants to complete the assignment. Set up a time for debriefing the homework.

4. *Debrief the homework.* Welcome participants back to the coaching activity. Review the homework and encourage them to give you feedback on the assignment. Encourage discussion by asking:

   - Which of the elements on handout 2 were part of the collaboration? How did they affect the collaborative's efforts?
   - Which of the elements were missing? How did their absence affect the collaborative's efforts?
   - What strategies could you (or the person you talked to) have encouraged or implemented to increase the success of the collaboration?

5. (a) *Examine decision-making.* Explain that shared decision-making is important to the collaborative's success. Ask participants to think for a minute or two about the way decisions are usually made on teams they are members of.

   (b) Review handout 3 with participants and have them choose the team decision-making process that best characterizes a team they are on, or have been on. Point out that in a collaborative effort, decision-making is shared equally by the partners; while collaborative organizers may have a plan in mind for a collaboration, they must be prepared to back away and let the partners determine the action.

6. *Close the activity.* Ask participants to recall their response to the question: "What would you have your magic wand do or change?" Encourage participants to pursue their call for action. State that utilizing elements of success and shared decision-making could enhance their ability to pursue this effort. Point out that activities in the following modules will give participants practice in initiating a collaborative effort.

Activity 2-4: Effective Meeting Planning

Purpose: To provide practice in assessing the effectiveness of meetings.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 4: *Choosing a Skilled Facilitator*
- Handout 5: *Involving Everyone*
- Handout 6: *Setting Ground Rules*
- Handout 7: *Meeting Agenda and Summary*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Provide an overview of the activity.* Stress the activity's focus—to assess what contributes to an effective meeting. Ask participants about their past experiences with meetings. Probe for their views on what made the meetings effective or not effective.

2. *Identify effective meeting components.* Using the background information as a guide, involve participants in a discussion on effective meetings. Include the following questions in the discussion:

   - What kinds of skills or qualities are most important for facilitating meetings?
   - What helps you to feel prepared and ready for a meeting?
   - What type of meeting place makes you feel most comfortable?
   - What format do you like a meeting to follow?
   - What do you think is the most important meeting outcome?
   - What helps you to feel involved, useful, or valued during a meeting?

3. (a) *Examine what makes a meeting effective.* Point out that a skilled facilitator is a critical ingredient of effective meetings. Review handout 4 with the group. Emphasize that when choosing a facilitator, it is important to look for the qualities or skills listed on the handout.

(b) Distribute and review handout 5. Stress that facilitators must be able to involve everyone in meetings, know when and how to intervene at critical moments, and remain neutral.

(c) Explain that all collaborative partners have a role in making meetings effective. Ask participants to think for a minute or two about the tasks they might take on to assist or support a facilitator. Then, ask participants to help you develop the list by sharing their thoughts on the tasks they would be willing to take on. Encourage participants to consider their strengths, interests, and preferences.

(d) Explain that setting ground rules also contributes greatly to the effectiveness of meetings. Stress that ground rules can make or break a team or collaborative effort; one of the first tasks of collaborative partners is to decide how to participate, make decisions, and resolve conflicts. Refer participants to handout 6, review the questions, and encourage additions.

4. (a) *Prepare participants for a homework assignment.* Ask participants to observe a meeting as homework and to take notes on what makes the meeting effective. Afterward, suggest participants meet privately with the facilitator to share what they learned though their observations, including: methods for involving all participants (handout 5), skilled facilitation (handout 4), and setting ground rules (handout 6). In addition, suggest participants refer the facilitator to handout 7 as a tool he/she may find helpful when planning meetings.

(b) Allow two weeks for participants to complete the assignment. Set up a time for debriefing the homework.

5. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Engage participants in processing the homework by raising the following questions:

- How would you describe the meeting you observed? What was effective?
- What might have made the meeting more effective? *(Probe for recommendations on preparation, ground rules, meeting process, group process, and facilitation techniques.)*
- What was the involvement level of the participants? What roles did they assume? How did they assist or support the facilitator?
- If you were the meeting facilitator, what would you have done differently?
- If you had been a participant in the meeting, what would you have done to promote its effectiveness?

6. *Close the activity.* Summarize the topics covered during the activity. To bring this part of the activity to a close, emphasize the following points:

   - Effective meetings occur when partners set criteria for holding effective meetings and ground rules on how they will work together, have a skilled group facilitator, and get everyone involved in the work of meeting.
   - Meeting jobs are usually chosen or assigned according to the interests, talents, and skills of the partners.
   - Jobs can be shared or rotated to help ensure that all partners feel involved, useful, and valued.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 2 are presented below. After completing Module 2, review the strategies with participants and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Refining Skills as a Group/Collaborative Facilitator**

  Explore possibilities for forming a mentoring relationship with a skilled group facilitator. Look for a mentor in the Head Start or broader community—someone who excels at the skills listed on handout 4. Get permission to observe the mentor two or three times as he/she convenes and facilitates a group meeting. While observing the meetings, take notes on what the mentor says or does to:

  — Build relationships among group members;
  — Keep the group informed and focused; and
  — Encourage the group to take action and move forward.

  Look for the specific ways the mentor intervenes with the group at critical moments. Jot down examples of how he/she:

  — Brings together different ideas;
  — Interprets group behaviors;
  — Expresses his/her own feelings and reactions; and
  — Gets the group to focus on the work at hand.

  After observing the meetings, arrange to meet with the mentor to go over your observations. Set up a time for the mentor to observe you facilitating a meeting. After the mentor observes you, meet with the mentor again to discuss your group facilitation skills and what you could do to improve on them.

- **Assessing the Collaborative Experience**

  If you are already involved in a collaborative effort that appears to be struggling, suggest partners take time to reflect on and discuss the elements that promote collaborative success. Use handout 2 as a guide for the discussion. Encourage the group to look at possible improvement strategies, such as: involving a skilled group facilitator; assigning partner roles and tasks; re-examining the collaborative's purpose, mission and goals; and recruiting new partners.

- **Making Meetings More Effective**

Identify an opportunity to apply what you learned from the training about holding effective meetings. For example, if you participate routinely in staff, team, or collaborative meetings, suggest that time be set aside during an upcoming meeting for you to guide the group in:

— Defining "effective meetings";
— Setting ground rules;
— Discussing ways to improve meeting preparation and arrangements, the meeting process, the group process, and information sharing; and
— Examining and deciding on the role(s) of meeting participants (e.g., facilitator, notetaker, conflict resolver, information gatherer, monitor, and celebration organizer).

Handout 1: Kids Place: A Community Partnership Model[1]

Instructions
Many communities are succeeding in improving services for children and families through collaborative efforts. Read about Kids Place and identify the elements that contributed to its success.

☐ OVERVIEW

Kids Place is a unique facility in rural Scott County, Indiana, that houses the county public health department; the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC); Head Start; and New Hope Services, a private nonprofit family support agency. Establishing Kids Place was truly a grassroots collaborative effort, and it is a tremendous example of the possibilities of community action—a comprehensive, coordinated family services center that works to involve the broader service community in better meeting the needs of young children and their families.

In rural areas, families are often physically isolated from each other and services are spread out over a wide geographic area. Kids Place addresses these issues by combining services into one location, offering home visits, and providing transportation to the center and child-care facilities so that parents can more easily participate in center activities.

Kids Place operates out of a 12,500 square-foot building designed and built to suit its needs. Visitors are greeted with ample parking, a comfortable reception area with a sofa and pleasant atmosphere, and a waiting room with toys that allows for positive interaction from the moment of arrival.

☐ HISTORY

In 1986, health, education, and social service providers met with parents to discuss the problems of young families and how to give children a better start in life. They decided the county needed a high-profile, attractive, centrally located family services center. All agreed that everyone in the county had to support the concept financially and philosophically. Two years of community awareness activities and fund-raising made it possible for Kids Place to open in 1988.

☐ COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPANTS

Scott County, Indiana, is a rural community 30 miles north of Louisville, Kentucky. It has a population of 22,000, with multiple high-risk factors including a 9.8 percent unemployment rate, a 20 percent teen pregnancy rate, a 62 percent high-school dropout rate, and a high percentage of families receiving government assistance.

Kids Place is open to everyone in the county. Participants learn about the program by word-of-mouth, Kids Place outreach efforts, and referrals from other service agencies.

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[1] Adapted from the National Resource Center for Family Support and Programs and the Family Resource Coalition, *The Basics of Family Support: A Guide for State Planners* (Chicago, Ill.: National Resource Center for Family Support and Programs, Family Resource Coalition, 1994).

Handout 1: Kids Place: A Community Partnership Model (continued)

☐ MISSION

Kids Place works to provide comprehensive, coordinated family services and to involve the wider community in meeting service needs.

☐ PROGRAM IN ACTION

Programs at Kids Place are dedicated to meeting families' needs in the most flexible and individual way possible. Services are provided not only at the center but also in homes, jails, schools, homeless shelters—wherever children and families are located.

Staff give top priority to developing trust with families. Families learn that staff think of them as individuals, not just case files. The comprehensiveness of services and the non-deficit approach are illustrated by the program participants who have become staff and by other staff who have used center services for their own needs. Staff members are extremely sensitive to the needs of the community because they are a part of the community.

Kids Place is linked with 32 public and private organizations. It exchanges referrals with these programs on a continuing basis. Some linkages are formal; for example, Kids Place has a contract with the Division of Family and Child Services to provide parent education programs. Other linkages are informal; for example, staff work with schools to meet the needs of participating children and families. The partners within Kids Place constantly communicate with each other, and sometimes, they also share staff.

☐ GOVERNANCE

New Hope Services administers Kids Place and has a 13-member board of directors that includes representatives from the county, businesses, and the community; at least 25 percent of the directors are parents. Kids Place does not have a separate board but does use advisory committees. These committees, made up of staff and parents, do much of the day-to-day decision-making, such as setting policies on behavior management or rates for day-care. In addition, program administrators from the various agencies meet as needed to discuss common concerns and future directions.

☐ EVALUATION

Kids Place prepares monthly statistical reports that indicate which services are being used by which families. The reports are studied quarterly to understand trends, track the progress of families, and assess whether goals stated in the annual strategic plan are being achieved. To keep services relevant, Kids Place annually surveys parents and staff. Their responses are reviewed and incorporated into the planning process. In addition, all staff participate in exit interviews when they resign.

☐ REPLICATION

New Hope Services works with other communities to replicate Kids Place. Each replication is planned, implemented, and finally administered by New Hope Services with the local community's involvement and support. Replicated sites are similar to Kids Place, but each site has adapted the program to meet its community's unique needs.

Handout 2: Elements of Successful Collaborations

__Overview__
What does it take to make a collaborative partnership work? Studies of collaborative partnerships show that the following elements or factors contribute to success.

UNIQUE PURPOSE

☐ A distinct purpose that is different from, but clearly connected to, the individual missions of the participating organizations; and
☐ A clearly defined mission.

ATTAINABLE GOALS

☐ Specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic goal statements;
☐ Commitment to achieving the goals;
☐ Moving on to another goal when one goal is achieved; and
☐ Celebrating goal achievement.

DISTINCT AND STRUCTURED MEMBERSHIP

☐ Skilled leadership;
☐ Diversity in skills, areas of expertise, and views of partners;
☐ A strengths-based effort;
☐ Realistic and clear expectations of roles, responsibilities, and time required of partners; and
☐ Committed and accountable members.

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE

☐ Open and frequent communication;
☐ Honest talk about self-interests, conflicts, and risks; and
☐ Informal and formal systems for keeping partners and other stakeholders informed.

SHARED RESOURCES

☐ Sufficient funds; and
☐ Time to do the work.

Handout 3: The Decision-Making Scale

Overview

One of the most important questions regarding team decision-making is ***"Who actually decides?"*** *Decisions are typically made in one of five ways, as illustrated below. When people are involved in making a decision, they are much more likely to be committed to that decision than when one person or a small group makes a decision on their behalf. Therefore, going up the decision- making scale (from individual decisions to unanimous decisions) increases commitment. However, going up the scale may also increase the difficulty people have in arriving at agreement.*

UNANIMOUS DECISION

The entire team considers the matter. All team members fully agree with the action to be taken and all fully subscribe to the decision that is made.

CONSENSUS DECISION

The entire team considers the matter with each member expressing a view and offering ideas. The team reaches a decision through compromise accepted by all members, regardless of how satisfied they are with the decision. (No majority rule voting or averaging of votes is allowed.)

MAJORITY DECISION

More than half of the members of the team make the decision, and it is binding for all concerned (many political and democratic organizations use this decision-making process).

MINORITY DECISION

A few team members meet to consider the matter and then make a decision. That decision is binding for everyone.

INDIVIDUAL DECISION

One person, normally the team leader or program manager, actually makes decisions for the team. Other team members are expected to abide by the decisions.

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Handout 4: Choosing a Skilled Facilitator

Overview

A skilled meeting facilitator is key to effective meetings and ultimately to the collaborative's success. Sometimes, the initiator of the collaborative takes on the job of facilitator, sometimes the job is shared by partners, and sometimes partners bring in an outside source to do the job. When deciding who will take on the job for your collaborative, look for a person, or persons, who can:

- ✔ Maintain a neutral or impartial position on decisions or actions;
- ✔ Identify and assess resources that may be of value to partners (e.g., information, organizations, consultants, funding sources);
- ✔ Accept and delegate responsibilities or tasks;
- ✔ Help partners problem-solve, resolve conflicts or differences, compromise, and reach consensus;
- ✔ Communicate verbally and in writing the collaborative's mission, goals, strategies, and action plans;
- ✔ Organize, arrange, and structure meetings so everyone feels prepared, respected, part of the process, and involved;
- ✔ Relate easily to different audiences (e.g., community leaders, elected officials, service providers, volunteers, and consumers);
- ✔ Keep partners focused on their shared vision, mission statement, and what needs to be done;
- ✔ Bring out and utilize the strengths of individual partners;
- ✔ Summarize and pull together different ideas or issues raised during a meeting;
- ✔ Give a personal reading on behaviors displayed in the group (e.g., "I'm starting to feel frustrated about not knowing where a lot of you stand on this issue."); and
- ✔ Focus attention on the agenda item at hand (e.g., "We seem to be getting side-tracked. Are you ready to get back to this item on our agenda, or do you want to talk about it again at our next meeting?").

Handout 5: Involving Everyone

Overview

A skilled facilitator must involve everyone in the collaborative's work of building relationships, sharing information and ideas, and taking action. Successful collaborations require everyone's involvement. Below are some of the ways facilitators (and other partners) can get everyone involved.

Meeting Preparations

- ✓ Take care of meeting logistics (e.g., meeting date, time, place, refreshments);
- ✓ Send out advance notices to clarify the meeting's purpose;
- ✓ Prepare a meeting agenda that shows what each agenda item requires (e.g., discussion, decision) and who is responsible; and
- ✓ Identify, collect, and send out materials to help partners get ready for a meeting.

Meeting Process

- ✓ Follow ground rules as set and agreed upon by partners;
- ✓ Follow the agenda, including start and end times;
- ✓ Guide actions to get the work done; and
- ✓ Review the meeting outcomes (i.e., what was accomplished, what happened, what was not resolved, and what will happen next).

Group Process

- ✓ Make sure all partners have a role;
- ✓ Confirm the value of each partner's role and contributions;
- ✓ Closely monitor group and partner behaviors, that surface during meetings and intervene at critical moments;
- ✓ Recognize membership organizations and others for helping the collaborative move forward; and
- ✓ Contact any partners who do not attend a meeting and encourage their participation.

Information-Sharing

- ✓ Keep an updated partner roster;
- ✓ Set up systems for keeping partners and key stakeholders informed about the collaborative;
- ✓ Have necessary documents available to partners, such as laws, interagency agreements, demographic data, and assessment findings;
- ✓ Write up meeting summaries, showing who attended, items covered, decisions reached, actions taken, accomplishments, partner assignments, and the agenda items for the next meeting; and
- ✓ Collect and provide data to help partners monitor and evaluate progress.

Handout 6: Setting Ground Rules[2]

Overview

A successful collaboration requires that all partners contribute to and have a stake in the process. Ground rules can help partners use time wisely, share leadership, and head in the same direction. Ground rules cover planning and conducting meetings, resolving conflicts, making decisions, and maintaining ongoing communication among partners. Ground rules are set by partners as they address the following questions:

☐ Where, when, and how often will we meet?

☐ What will be our time frame for working together?

☐ How will we share responsibility for organizing and conducting the meetings?

☐ Who will prepare and contribute to the meeting agenda?

☐ What rules will guide discussion during meetings? Guard confidentiality?

☐ How will we handle information needs, data gathering, and record keeping?

☐ How will we make decisions? By majority rule or consensus?

☐ What steps will we take to make sure decisions are not made behind the scenes?

☐ What will happen when there is a conflict?

☐ Under what circumstances will we seek a third-party facilitator?

☐ How will we evaluate the progress of our work?

There are no right or wrong answers to the above questions. The answers come from the partners of each collaborative effort.

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[2] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 7: Meeting Agenda and Summary[3]

__Overview__

Effective meetings bring commitment, motivation, and energy to collaborative partners. One strategy that helps ensure an effective meeting is proper planning. This handout serves as a tool that you may find helpful when planning your collaborative's next meeting.

Calling the Next Meeting (Send to participants in advance of next meeting)

Collaboration Name or Purpose:
Purpose of Next Meeting:
Meeting Date: ***Location:*** ***Start and End Times:***
Facilitator: ***Phone :***
***Participants** (address and phone numbers):*

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[3] Adapted from Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994).

Handout 7: Meeting Agenda and Summary (continued)

Meeting Agenda

Item	*Status*	*Responsibility*	*Time*

Summary of Decisions Made/Actions to Be Taken

Decision Made/Action to be Taken	*Responsibility*	*Deadline*

Handout 7: Meeting Agenda and Summary (continued)

Summary of Achievements to Date

Achievements	*Responsibility*	*Date Completed*

Module 3

Challenges of Collaboration

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Anticipate** and **manage** the challenges of collaboration; and
- **Respond** constructively to conflict.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 3 that serve as a knowledge base for the skills needed to meet the challenges of collaboration include:

- **Challenges of Collaboration.** All collaboratives face challenges, or sandtraps, as they take on new ways of doing business. Challenges are a natural part of the collaborative process. Depending on how the challenges are handled, they can cause the collaborative to lose momentum and collapse, or they can be the springboard for creativity and revitalization.
- **Conflict.** Conflict is about personal and organizational differences and preferences. Not all conflicts need to be resolved; however, they must come to the surface in order to be recognized, clarified, and managed.

Background Information

It is not unusual for a collaborative to get stuck or lose steam. Many different kinds of events or circumstances can cause a momentum shift, including: frequent membership changes; buried conflicts; lack results; insufficient resources; or shifts in community or agency priorities. The collaborative may also become static or inflexible and lose its capacity to adapt to changing needs or situations. However, when challenges are anticipated, dealt with, and balanced with achievements, they can be the building blocks for a stronger collaborative.

Addressing the Challenges of Collaboration

Challenges, or sandtraps, often serve as a hazard, threat, or danger to be dealt with because they can derail a collaborative effort. The potential sandtraps of a collaborative fall into three broad categories: organizational, leadership, and membership. By knowing what kinds of challenges to expect, collaboratives can avoid or respond to the challenges more readily.

- **Organizational.** Organizational sandtraps include:

  — Deciding not to begin until all stakeholders are at the table;
  — Failing to set clear ground rules;
  — Losing sight of the collaborative's purpose or mission;
  — Choosing unattainable goals;
  — Trying to handle too many issues or actions at once;
  — Inadequate resources for carrying out plans;
  — Adverse community relations or media attention;

  - Not stopping to evaluate, reflect, and celebrate; or
  - Not acknowledging or avoiding conflict.

- **Leadership.** Leadership sandtraps include:
  - Trying to maintain control by resisting power-sharing;
  - Allowing political pressure or self-interests to drive the collaborative;
  - Lack of shared leadership;
  - Not involving consumers, direct services staff, and policy-makers in critical decisions;
  - Becoming too dependent on one or two partners; or
  - Unrealistic expectations or demands.

- **Membership.** Membership sandtraps include:
  - Attempting to act before partners establish a sense of trust and ownership in a shared vision;
  - Frequent turnover in partners or membership organizations;
  - Unequal distribution of work or recognition of partners;
  - Not taking the time to involve opponents, who could easily block what the collaborative's mission and goals;
  - Failing to recognize an individual partner's needs or self-interests; or
  - Turf battles or power struggles among partners.

In order to prepare for challenges, and avoid sandtraps, partners can:

- Confront underlying issues, such as a vague vision, low trust, power struggles, and differing work styles;

- Create partner role descriptions and interagency agreements to clarify expectations and responsibilities;

- Re-energize membership by rotating roles or recruiting new partners;

- Stay abreast of significant community developments or trends;

- Evaluate often what is and what is not working; and

- Celebrate!.

Managing Conflict

Conflict is about personal and organizational differences and preferences. The differing values, beliefs, life experiences, backgrounds, and self-interests of partners set the stage for conflict. At the same time, it is partner diversity that makes a collaborative a strong force for change. Conflict can be managed by:

- Understanding Responses to Conflict

It is critical for partners to understand how they, as individuals, respond to conflict. People tend to respond to conflict in a number of ways. Each way has its benefits and drawbacks and strikes a different balance between personal concerns and the concerns of others.

When people use **competition** to respond to conflict, they focus on winning, regardless of the cost to others. People who use **accommodation** to respond to conflict neglect their own concerns and focus, instead, on the concerns of others. When **avoidance** is used, no one's concerns are addressed; instead, conflict is sidestepped or put onto the back burner. **Compromise**, on the other hand, is used by people who look for a middle ground—a way to give everyone some of what they want. Finally, people who use the **win-win** way of responding to conflict seek a solution where everyone wins—a solution that satisfies the concerns of all partners.

- Identifying Sources of Conflict

Uncovering conflict and pinpointing its source are two more steps toward conflict management. Sometimes, a simple question such as, "what's happening here?" or "what's on everyone's mind?" will bring a masked conflict to the surface and get partners talking about how to resolve it. Other times, it may take a lot of discussion to get to the real source of a conflict and its solution. Typical sources of conflict include: historical baggage between organizations or partners; vagueness about the collaborative's mission or goals; low trust and/or power struggles among partners; little or no concrete proof of progress; lack of authority to act; or too many competing demands on partner time.

- Learning to Be Unconditionally Constructive

Being unconditionally constructive encourages the other side to act constructively in return. Here are some key points to remember:

— Think about your response before acting. Respond to the issue, rather than reacting to your emotions;
— Try to understand the situation from the other person's point of view;
— Communicate clearly and briefly. Do not monopolize center stage;
— Listen carefully and ask questions to clarify (not attack) the other person's position;
— Keep an open mind and look for potential points of agreement;
— Practice backing away and letting the group process determine the action; and
— Do not ignore hostile actions, but try to identify the underlying issues and bring them to the surface.

- Creating a Conflict Resolution Process

  When the collaborative has a process for resolving conflict constructively, partners are more likely to risk bringing up a conflict and trying to work it out. Thus, another important step toward managing conflict is having a process in place that provides vehicles for partners to:

  - Assess the impact of a conflict on the collaborative's mission and goals;
  - Give everyone an opportunity to speak and be heard;
  - Find points of agreement or, if that is not possible, agree to disagree and move on;
  - Call a meeting for the sole purpose of resolving the conflict or dispute;
  - Appoint a subgroup to study options for resolving the conflict;
  - Use an outside facilitator or mediator; and
  - Forgive and heal.

Even the most difficult conflicts can be managed when a collaborative creates a conflict resolution process that encourages partners to understand and respect each other's views and to continue working together despite differences.

Instructions

More information on conflict management is provided in the *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community*, particularly the management series.

Activity 3-1: The Challenge Can

Purpose: To uncover the challenges of collaboration.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Dangerous Sandtraps*
- A large can labeled "The Challenge Can"
- A package of 5" x 7" index cards
- Four sheets of newsprint labeled: "Organizational," "Leadership," "Membership," and "Other"
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

Trainer Preparation Note: Prior to conducting this activity, carefully review the background information on **Addressing the Challenges of Collaboration**. The examples given in that section will help with decisions about where to place each "index card challenge." As an alternative to placing the challenges in the pre-set categories, you may want to guide the group in identifying themes or other categories.

1. *Set the context for the activity.* Point out that the purpose of this activity is to help participants prepare for the challenges that occur when collaborating with others. Explain that challenges must be anticipated and unmasked in order to deal effectively with them.

2. (a) *Begin the activity.* Distribute four index cards to each participant. Ask participants to think about the challenges they have faced, or anticipate facing, as a collaborative partner. Instruct participants to record at least two of the challenges on the index cards, using a separate card for each challenge. If the group needs help getting started, give an example or two from the background information.

   (b) Allow five minutes for participants to complete their index cards, then pass the Challenge Can around the room to collect the cards.

3. (a) *Provide a framework for discussing the challenges of collaboration.* Tape up four sheets of newsprint with the following labels: "Organizational," "Leadership," "Membership," and "Other." Explain that most challenges can be traced to a collaborative's organization (i.e., structure and process), leadership, or membership. If necessary, give participants examples from the module's background information.

   (b) Ask for a volunteer to select an index card from the Challenge Can and read it to the group. Decide with the volunteer whether the challenge is an organizational, leadership, membership, or another type of issue.

Once a decision is reached, ask the volunteer to tape the card onto the appropriately labeled sheet of newsprint.

(c) Repeat **step 3(b)** above with different volunteers until no more index cards remain in the Challenge Can.

(d) Go over the index cards taped onto each sheet of labeled newsprint. Point out recurring challenges or themes.

4. *Discuss challenges of greatest concern to the group.* With the group, pick out one recurring challenge (or cluster of similar challenges) from each of the four sheets of labeled newsprint. Taking one challenge at a time, encourage participants to share their experiences and views by raising the following:

    - What kind of impact might this challenge have on a collaborative? On you as a collaborative partner?
    - How might acknowledging this challenge turn out to be good for a collaborative? For you?
    - What are some possibilities for managing this challenge?

5. (a) *Close the activity.* Bring the activity to a close. Recap highlights from the discussion. Distribute handout 1 and suggest participants refer to it when working in a collaborative partnership.

    (b) Make the following points in closing the activity:

    - Challenges, including conflicts, are inevitable and can be healthy for a collaborative because they provide opportunities for partners to gain clarity, practice new skills, and recommit themselves to collaboration. When challenges stay buried, or are only discussed behind the scenes, they can eventually become destructive and cause partners to abandon the collaborative.
    - Strategies for recognizing and managing challenges can be built into a collaborative. Those strategies include:

        — Setting clear ground rules;
        — Defining partner roles and expectations;
        — Taking time out during meetings to evaluate what is working and what is not;
        — Frequently revisiting what originally brought partners together;
        — Celebrating all achievements no matter how small;
        — Creating a conflict resolution process before conflicts arise;
        — Getting outside help or training.

Activity 3-2: Managing Conflict

Purpose: To practice constructive techniques for managing conflict.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *Managing Conflict Worksheet*
- Handout 3: *Tips for Managing Conflict*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Warm-up the group.* Ask participants to think about the way they usually respond to conflict. Raise the following questions, allowing a few seconds between each for self-reflection:

    - Do you usually respond to conflict by **competing**—doing all you can to win with little or no regard for others?

    - Do you usually respond to conflict by **accommodating**—by letting others win just to keep peace or harmony?

    - Do you usually respond to conflict by **avoiding** it—by not letting your concerns or needs be known or by dodging issues?

    - Do you usually look for a **compromise** to respond to a conflict—a solution that partially addresses everyone's concerns or needs?

    - Or, do you usually look for a **win-win** way to respond to a conflict—a solution that makes everyone a winner?

2. *Provide a brief overview of conflict management.* Using the background information to guide your remarks, go over the basic steps of conflict management: understanding how we tend to manage conflict, getting to the source of the conflict, learning to be unconditionally constructive, and having a process in place for resolving the conflict.

3. (a) *Prepare participants for a small group activity on conflict management.* Explain that the purpose of the upcoming small group activity is to provide practice in managing conflict. Refer the group to handout 2 and review the instructions.

    (b) Divide participants into small groups, each having five to six members. Explain that the large group will reconvene in 35 minutes to debrief the small group activity.

4. *Process the small group activity.* Reconvene the large group. Use the following questions while debriefing:

- What conflicts are evident in the PACT collaborative? How did the partners respond to the conflict?
- Which conflict do you see as most threatening to the collaborative's survival? Why? What seems to be the source of that conflict?
- What would you try first to resolve or manage the most threatening conflict? Why? What would you try next?
- What would you suggest to help this collaborative regain its momentum?

5. *Close the activity.* Distribute handout 3, pointing out its usefulness to a collaborative. In closing, emphasize the following points:

    - Lack of conflict only indicates that issues are buried. A pattern of allowing conflicts to surface, recognizing their sources, and exploring resolutions will better serve a collaborative.
    - While resolving or managing conflict can be a difficult struggle for a collaborative, it builds strength and credibility and contributes to a critical sense of ownership and common purpose.

Activity 3-3: Preparing for Collaboration's Challenges

Purpose: To enhance skills in anticipating, responding, and managing the challenges of collaboration.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Dangerous Sandtraps*
- Handout 3: *Tips for Managing Conflict*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Introduce the session.* Begin by presenting the activity's purpose. Point out there are numerous challenges that develop when people collaborate and that conflict is one of these challenges. Emphasize that people respond to conflict in many different ways. Based on the background information, briefly describe the five (competition, accommodation, avoidance, compromise, and win-win) ways people respond to conflict.

2. (a) *Guide participants in assessing their response to conflict.* Ask participants to reflect on a serious conflict. Make it clear that you will not ask participants to share the details of the conflict, but you want them to think about the following questions:

    - What bothered you most about this conflict?

- How did the conflict affect you? The other person?
- Why was the outcome important to you? What was at stake?
- How could the conflict have been handled better?

(b) After allowing a few minutes for self-reflection, give participants the option of sharing. Review the ways people respond to conflict. Ask participants which way best describes how they responded to the conflict, which way best describes how the other person responded to the conflict, and how could the conflict could have been managed.

3. *Role play a conflict between collaborative partners.* Choose a conflict that involves a collaborative; for example, a partner who rarely attends scheduled meetings or a partner who does not follow through on assigned tasks. Do an impromptu role play depicting the conflict, with participants showing how they would respond using each conflict style. Afterward, discuss each conflict style, the feelings you and participants experienced during the role play, how the conflict was managed, and the outcome. Point out that in a collaborative, it is critical for participants to be attuned to the way they and other partners respond to conflict.

Coach Preparation Note: As an alternative to developing your own conflict scenario, you may want to describe the scenario in handout 2.

4. *Explore ways of handling conflict.* Discuss typical sources of conflict and the components of a conflict resolution process, based upon the background information. Refer participants to handout 3 and review the tips for managing conflict constructively.

5. (a) *Practice analyzing and managing conflicts.* Give participants a homework assignment. Tell participants that when you meet again you want them to:

- Describe one conflict they experienced or observed during a meeting;
- Describe the responses and the primary way(s) the conflict was handled during the meeting;
- Describe what they or others did to try to get the group to manage the conflict constructively.

(b) Choose a time to meet again within the following two weeks. Offer to be available to participants to answer questions about the homework assignment. Explain that in the next session you will want to hear from participants about the outcomes of their assignment and explore some of collaboration's other challenges.

6. *Explore strategies used for managing the conflict and their outcomes.* When participants return, ask them to share their general reactions to the homework assignment. Engage participants in a discussion on conflict management, using the following questions as a guide:

    - What was the conflict you experienced or observed?

    - How did the individual meeting participants respond to the conflict? Did you see any competing going on? Accommodating? Avoidance? Compromising? Win-win strategies?

    - How was the conflict managed? Did you or others do anything to get the group to handle the conflict constructively? What happened as a result? *(Probe for ways participants/others tried to unmask the conflict, get to the source of the conflict, be unconditionally constructive, find a solution, or create a conflict resolution process.)*

7. (a) *Explore other types of collaborative challenges.* Encourage participants to identify all the challenges they may experience as a collaborative partner. List the challenges on a sheet of newsprint, as they are identified.

    (b) Provide a brief overview on the challenges of collaboration, using the key concepts and background information to guide your remarks.

    (c) Refer participants to handout 1; compare the sandtraps to the challenges listed on the newsprint. Stress the importance of staying alert for sandtraps, avoiding them whenever possible, and practicing pro-active strategies for managing them.

    (d) Again review the list of challenges. Help participants identify a strategy for preventing or managing each challenge on the list.

8. *Close the session.* Stress the following points in closing the session:

    - Any collaborative process can be filled with challenges and conflicts. Not only are partners involved in creating change in the community, but they are also involved in changing the way they are used to doing business. Change is rarely easy.

    - Keeping a collaborative alive and energized is an ongoing process. However, strategies for keeping partners on track and motivated are well within the reach of staff and any collaborative.

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 3 are presented below. After completing Module 3, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Enhancing Skills in Conflict Management**

  Form a peer study group which meets weekly to enhance their conflict resolution skills. Encourage the group to develop a process for resolving conflict. Ask members to take turns presenting a conflict they experienced or observed during the past week. Then, do an impromptu role play of the conflict situation, using the process for managing conflict. Afterwards, discuss the reactions of the role players and the observers, and the conflict's outcome.

- **Dealing With Collaboration's Challenges**

  Volunteer to be a member of a collaborative effort at work or in your community. During meetings watch for challenges. Bring your observations up with the group. Practice your skills as a group facilitator by getting everyone involved in discussions about your observations. Be ready to suggest some ways these challenges might be addressed, such as reviewing the collaborative's mission, expanding membership, getting training, involving a third-party facilitator, re-examining the needs and self-interests of partners, and talking openly about underlying issues or partner differences in communication and work styles.

Handout 1: Dangerous Sandtraps[1]

Overview
All collaboratives experience challenges. Some are inevitable, while others are dangerous sandtraps that can be avoided by alert collaborative partners. Below are some common sandtraps to avoid, or act upon if they appear.

Organizational. Organizational sandtraps include:

- Deciding not to begin until all stakeholders are at the table;
- Failing to set clear ground rules;
- Losing sight of the collaborative's purpose and mission;
- Choosing unattainable goals;
- Trying to handle too many issues or actions at once;
- Inadequate resources for carrying out plans;
- Adverse community relations or media attention;
- Not stopping to evaluate, reflect, and celebrate; or
- Not acknowledging or avoiding conflict.

Leadership. Leadership sandtraps include:

- Trying to maintain control by resisting power-sharing or shared decision-making;
- Allowing political pressure or individual partner self-interests to drive the collaborative;
- Lack of shared leadership;
- Not involving consumers, direct services staff, and policy-makers in critical decisions;
- Becoming too dependent on one or two partners to keep the collaborative going; or
- Unrealistic expectations or demands.

Membership. Potential sandtraps surrounding a collaborative's membership include:

- Attempting to act before partners establish a sense of trust and ownership in a shared vision;
- Frequent turnover in partners or membership organizations;
- Unequal distribution of work or recognition of members.;
- Not taking the time to involve opponents, who could easily block what the collaborative's mission or goals;
- Failing to recognize an individual partner's needs or self-interests; or
- Turf battles or power struggles among partners.

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[1] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 2: Managing Conflict Worksheet

Instructions

Select a facilitator and a recorder for your small group. Read the scenario below and then discuss the questions that follow. Your group has 35 minutes to complete its discussion. When the large group reconvenes, you will be asked to summarize your discussion outcomes.

Collaborative Scenario

The PACT collaborative has been meeting about twice a month for a year. Originally, partners from 10 community agencies joined forces around an alarming fact—the community had the highest rate of infant deaths in the state and the fifth-highest rate in the nation. The collaborative set out to make its community known as "the place where all babies thrive."

At today's meeting, partners are trying to come to grips with the news that more teenage girls are getting pregnant than graduating from the local high school. A vast majority of the babies born to the teens are premature. Several partners, including the high school's counselor, Dedra Wooten, are saying the collaborative's efforts to educate the community about the importance of prenatal care, healthy diets, and no smoking or drinking during pregnancy have failed. They want the collaborative to develop a school-based pregnancy prevention program. Other partners are saying it's too soon to change strategies; they want to continue the thriving babies education campaign for at least another year. With no apparent solution to the dispute, one of the partners urges the group to go on to the next agenda item.

The next item on the agenda is grant-writing. Funds for next year's operating and project expenses are scarce. Last year the collaborative was successful in getting a start-up grant from a local foundation, which was then matched by the agencies participating in the collaborative. Joshua Stokes, who wrote the proposal for last year's grant, has not come to the collaborative's last three meetings; no one at today's meeting knows why. After everyone at the meeting today says they have neither the skills nor the time to write a proposal, the decision is made to table the grant-writing topic until next month. In the meantime, the collaborative's facilitator, Matt Henderson, offers to call Joshua and see if he's willing to write another proposal for the collaborative.

Beverly Abbot, from the community's Early Head Start program, brings up the last item on today's meeting agenda—parent participation in the collaborative. She reminds the group that she has raised the question of getting parents involved in the collaborative before but no decision has been reached. She urges the group to expand its membership to include parents. The question is debated for about an hour. The group is split—three partners are against parent involvement and three are for parent involvement; the remaining two partners voice no opinion. The biggest argument made against inviting parents is the collaborative is not ready for consumers; it needs to focus, instead, on building interagency commitment to the collaborative. The issue of parent involvement gets dropped again, with no resolution in sight.

Most partners agree that interagency commitment seems to be waning and without some dramatic results soon they expect their agencies to pull out of the collaborative. As the meeting ends, several partners announce they can't come to the next meeting. A variety of excuses are given, but it seems clear that today's meeting has left everyone feeling frustrated and ineffective.

Handout 2: Managing Conflict Worksheet (continued)

Discussion Questions

☐ What conflicts are evident in the PACT collaborative? How did the partners respond to the conflict?

☐ Which conflict do you see as most threatening to the collaborative's survival? Why? What seems to be the source of that conflict? *(Some common sources of conflict to consider include: vagueness about the collaborative's mission or goals, low trust or power struggles among partners, little or no concrete signs of progress, lack of partner authority to act, and partners not having enough time to devote to the collaborative's work.)*

☐ What would you try first to resolve or manage the most threatening conflict? Why? What would you try next? *(Some possibilities to consider include: revisiting the collaborative's mission, getting everyone's ideas on what the source of the conflict is and ways to resolve it, searching for a compromise or a win-win solution, asking a few partners to study the conflict in-depth and propose a solution, or getting a mediator to help the collaborative work through the conflict.)*

☐ What would you suggest to help this collaborative regain its momentum?

Handout 3: Tips for Managing Conflict[2]

Overview
Conflict is about personal and organizational differences and preferences. All collaboratives experience conflicts. Conflict can be managed by:

- **Understanding Responses to Conflict**. It is critical for partners to understand how they, as individuals, respond to conflict. People tend to respond to conflict in a number of ways. Each way has its benefits and drawbacks and strikes a different balance between personal concerns and the concerns of others. Typical responses include:

  - ☐ *Competing:* Focusing on winning, regardless of the cost to others.
  - ☐ *Accommodating:* Neglecting one's own concerns and focusing, instead, on the concerns of others.
  - ☐ *Avoiding:* No one's concerns are dealt with. Instead, conflict is sidestepped or put onto the back burner until a better time, or not at all.
  - ☐ *Compromising:* Used by people who look for a middle ground—a way to give all partners some of what they want or ask for.
  - ☐ *Win-win:* Seeking a solution that satisfies the concerns of everyone.

- **Identifying Sources of Conflict**. Uncovering conflict and pinpointing its source are two more steps toward conflict management. Typical sources of conflict include historical baggage between organizations or partners, vagueness about the collaborative's mission, low trust and/or power struggles among partners, little or no concrete proof of progress, lack of authority to act, or too many competing demands on partner time. You can bring a masked conflict to the surface and get people talking about how to resolve it by:

  - ☐ Asking questions such as, "what's happening here?" or "what's on everyone's mind?"; or
  - ☐ Initiating a discussion about the real source of a conflict.

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[2] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington: D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 3: Tips for Managing Conflict (continued)

- **Learning to Be Unconditionally Constructive.** Being unconditionally constructive encourages the other side to act constructively in return. Here are some key points to remember:

  - ☐ Think about your response before acting. Respond to the issue, rather than reacting to your emotions;
  - ☐ Try to understand the situation from the other person's point of view;
  - ☐ Communicate clearly and briefly. Do not monopolize center stage;
  - ☐ Listen carefully and ask questions to clarify (not attack) the other person's position;
  - ☐ Keep an open mind and look for potential points of agreement;
  - ☐ Practice backing away and letting the group process determine the action; and
  - ☐ Do not ignore hostile actions but try to identify the underlying issues and bring them to the surface.

- **Creating a Conflict Resolution Process.** Some tips on resolving conflict include:

  - ☐ Going back to the collaborative's mission with the question, "If we want these results, what must we do about this conflict?";
  - ☐ Get everyone's views on what the conflict is and possibilities for resolving it;
  - ☐ Search actively for a compromise or a win-win solution;
  - ☐ If settlement of a conflict seems impossible, agree to disagree while continuing to work together;
  - ☐ Call a meeting for the sole purpose of resolving the conflict or dispute;
  - ☐ Appoint a subgroup to study options for resolving or managing the conflict;
  - ☐ Get a third-party facilitator or mediator involved in finding a solution to the conflict; and
  - ☐ Establish rituals for forgiveness and healing.

Module 4

Practicing the Collaborative Process

Outcomes

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- **Get** people involved in the decision to act and **encourage** the development of a common base of knowledge;
- **Guide** collaborative partners in defining a shared vision;
- **Use** the strategic planning steps to prepare a plan of action for a collaborative effort; and
- **Recognize** the importance of evaluation throughout the collaborative process.

Key Concepts

The key concepts of Module 4 that serve as a knowledge base for the collaborative process include:

- **Call for Action.** A call for action is an issue, problem, concern, or need that ignites people to act.
- **Collaborative Partners.** Once a decision to act is made, potential partners must be chosen, recruited, and brought to the table. Basically, anyone who has a stake or role in the **call for action,** or who can be part of the solution, is a potential partner.
- **Building a Base of Common Knowledge.** Creating a climate of mutual respect, acceptance, and trust is crucial to getting the collaboration off to a good start. Partners accomplish this when they take enough time to learn about each other and the individual organizations, and have opportunities to disclose self-interests—to discuss what is important to them and what they need from the collaborative.
- **Shared Vision.** A shared vision is a clear picture of what you hope to create; it is essential to sustaining a collaborative effort. The vision focuses on future possibilities—not current problems—and leads partners toward actions and desired results. A shared vision generates energy, motivates partners, and tells everyone where the collaborative is going.
- **Strategic Planning.** Strategic planning is a comprehensive planning process that provides the framework for collaborative action. This five-step process involves 1) defining the collaborative's mission; 2) assessing the environment and the collaborative's capacities; 3) establishing well-formed goals; 4) exploring and selecting strategies; and 5) developing a plan of action.
- **Evaluation.** Ongoing evaluation tells the partners how well they and their strategies are working and guides decisions on changes or modifications

to the collaborative effort. Evaluation can be a relatively simple process, with partners measuring effort, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Background Information

Attention to choosing and engaging collaborative partners, developing a base of common knowledge, and defining a shared vision are essential to developing a strategic plan—the framework for action. This module is devoted to practicing the first three stages of the collaborative process: 1) getting together; 2) building trust and ownership; and 3) strategic planning. This module also guides participants toward taking action, the fourth stage of collaboration.

Getting Together[1]

Initiators of a collaborative effort usually come together due to a call for action or a vision of how community life could be better; they reach out and share their vision in ways that attract others to become their partners. Initiators tend to choose partners they know, are aware of, or have access to. However, there are other selection criteria to consider:

- **Capacity.** The scope of a collaborative effort often dictates the number of needed partners. However, too many partners can cause difficulties in scheduling meetings and in giving everyone the chance to speak and be heard. Sometimes, collaboratives with many members subdivide into smaller groups with each group assigned to a specific task. Ideally, a collaborative, or its sub-groups, should have no more than 15 members. At the same time, the collaborative door must always be kept open for new partners.

- **Governing Bodies and Policy Groups.** In a collaborative, it is important to involve persons who have policy-making and governing authority as partners or informed stakeholders. Getting organizations to buy into the collaborative effort occurs more readily when policy-makers and members of governing boards are part of the collaborative process.

- **Potential Opponents.** We tend to avoid people who oppose us or who make us feel uncomfortable. However, if they possess skills or resources the collaborative needs to succeed and are in a position to obstruct a collaborative effort, it is important to invite them to the table and point out the advantages of working together. Often, potential opponents become critical allies.

- **Community History.** The history of community organizations is another important consideration in choosing partners; that is, who has worked well together in the past and who has not. During the start-up phase, a history of positive working relationships helps a collaborative come together.

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[1] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

- **Variety in Skills.** Collaboratives need people who collectively have a variety of skills. Initiators should look first to the skills they bring to the collaborative effort and then to those of potential partners. Important skills to look for include leadership, planning and facilitating, resource development, evaluation, and communication (writing and speaking).

- **Territory.** Initiators of collaboratives tend to invite people from disciplines or organizations similar to theirs. However, the information, skills, resources, community ownership, and support that collaboratives require may come from a variety of sectors:

  — *Businesses and Business Organizations.* The involvement of large corporations, small businesses, and business organizations often brings expertise in information management systems, marketing techniques, and financial strategies—valuable help that often proves vital to a collaborative. Other possible benefits are the loaning of staff to work on a specific activity or the use of office space or equipment.

  — *Consumers.* These are the people who will be most affected by the collaborative's initiatives. If a collaborative's efforts are to improve services to children and families and achieve broad-based community support, the people who live in the collaborative's targeted neighborhoods and/or use services must be engaged as partners.

  — *Elected Officials.* Elected officials are usually supportive of a collaborative's desires to improve community conditions or the effectiveness of services. For collaboratives pursuing wide system change, the support of elected officials can help to bring the right players to the table, create the right conditions for action, and leverage resources from public sectors. Elected officials may be partners, or they may be part of the network the collaborative chooses to keep well-informed. In deciding when and how to involve elected officials, initiators need to weigh a number of factors, including the officials' political agenda as well as potential risks and pressures.

  — *The Media.* Decisions to involve the media in the collaborative should usually wait until the collaborative is ready to go public. Media attention is alluring, but if the collaborative is unsure of the message it wants to convey to the community, newspaper and television coverage can sometimes backfire.

  — *Natural Community Leaders.* All communities have natural leaders who are the voice for underserved populations, low-income families, and minority populations. Their participation as partners helps ensure that the collaborative's mission responds to the full range of community expectations and needs. Many natural leaders also bring power to the collaborative due to their charisma, persuasive speaking abilities, visibility, and base of community support.

— *Private Providers, Non-Profit and Grassroots Organizations.* This sector brings to the collaborative 1) experience in developing effective services and resources and 2) the support of private citizens. Many organizations in this sector have well-developed volunteer networks and useful community contacts.

— *Public-Sector Organizations.* Public agencies and organizations bring major resources into a community. Thus, they bring legitimacy and visibility to a collaborative, expand the possibilities for supporting larger numbers of children and families, and provide linkages with federal and state agencies.

Building Trust and Ownership[2]

Once potential partners are identified, attention turns to building trust and ownership by engaging them in the collaborative, building a base of common knowledge, and developing a shared vision of what needs to change. In the most effective collaboratives, partners take time to understand each other's organizations and self-interests. It is important to remember that once partners make a joint commitment to collaborate, basic ground rules for working together must be reexamined and revised and resources need for collaborative planning must be identified.

- Engaging Partners

  Recruiting the right partners for a collaborative effort often requires more than invitations to initial or exploratory meetings. A number of steps may be necessary to lay the groundwork for participation. Thus, initiators of a collaborative must be prepared to reach out to potential partners and get them engaged. Handout 5 provides some strategies for engaging partners in the collaborative effort.

- Building a Base of Common Knowledge

  Building a base of common knowledge means working to understand self-interests and personal similarities and differences. Self-interests are powerfully motivating and can work for a collaboration when partners openly discuss, "What is in this for me? My organization? The people I represent?" Each partner has something to gain from participating: influence, money, prestige, contacts, career advancement, goodwill, and so on. The more partners speak openly about self-interests, the stronger the chances for building trust and achieving a win-win outcome for all.

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[2] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Knowing where partners stand in terms of personal similarities and differences also helps to build trust. For example, when planning initial meetings it is helpful to find out what partners need to feel comfortable or what traditions are important to them. Including time during meetings for partners to talk candidly about their cultural backgrounds and values; previous experiences with collaboratives; the resources they bring to the collaborative (e.g., expertise, resources, connections); their views on meeting procedures; and their interpretation of vague terms helps create a respectful, supportive, and accepting collaborative climate.

- Developing a Shared Vision

Simply stated, a vision is a clear picture of what you hope to create.[3] For collaborative partners, developing a shared vision is a critical juncture. Each partner is likely to come to the table with a different picture. Knitting the different pictures into a vision that captures the essence of the collaboration takes time and a lot of listening.

A shared vision is essential to sustaining a collaborative effort. It focuses on the possibilities for children and families to have a better life—not problems—and leads partners toward actions and desired results. A shared vision generates energy and motivation in partners and tells everyone where the collaborative is going.

Strategic Planning[4]

Strategic planning is a comprehensive planning process that provides the framework for collaborative action. Strategic planning involves five steps that can be revisited by partners at any time. The steps include: 1) developing the collaborative's mission statement; 2) assessing the environment and the collaborative's capacities; 3) establishing well-formed goals; 4) examining and selecting strategies; and 5) developing a plan of action.

- Step One: Develop a Mission Statement

In this step, the shared vision that brought the partners together is refined and developed into a mission statement. A carefully crafted mission statement captures the shared vision (the direction), unique purpose (what you want to achieve), and the values and beliefs (the rationale) of the collaboration. The mission statement charts the collaborative's future direction and establishes the basis for strategic planning decisions. Examples of mission statements include:

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[3] Judith Chynoweth and Barbara Dyer from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

[4] Adapted from US Department of Health and Human Services, *Strengthening Homeless Families: A Coalition-Building Guide* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1996).

— *Every child will grow up healthy, be secure, and become literate and economically productive.* Youth Futures Authority, Savannah-Chatham County, Georgia.

— *To make Racine the nation's most youth-friendly community, every member of the community will be personally involved in supporting and guiding Racine's children as they move from infancy to adulthood.* Racine, Wisconsin, Community Coalition for Youth.

Mission statements focus on possibilities; they do not include the how-to's for achieving the results. The following questions can serve as guides for preparing a mission statement:

— Does our mission statement describe what we will accomplish and for whom?

— Is the scope of work (how big, how many, how much) suggested in our mission statement?

— Does our mission statement convey our vision and a unique purpose? Is the purpose connected to, but different from, the missions of our individual organizations?

— Is our mission statement easy for everyone to understand?

- Step Two: Assess the Environment and the Collaborative's Capacities

This step requires 1) an environmental analysis and 2) a capacity assessment. An environmental analysis involves finding out about forces external to the collaboration, and their potential impact on the collaborative. For example, a collaborative working to coordinate services for children with disabilities would want to study agency policies on service eligibility, local funding streams, and federal, state, and local laws.

A capacity assessment engages partners in an examination of the collaborative's ability to accomplish its mission, in light of its internal strengths (e.g., skills, talents, advantages, resources, and opportunities) and limitations. Failure to conduct an accurate and thorough capacity assessment can cause a false sense of security among partners. The capacity assessment points out the collaborative's strengths, as well as what needs to be done to make the collaborative stronger.

- Step Three: Establish Well-formed Goals

Goals are specific statements of what collaborative partners intend to do; they are indicators of the change partners want to achieve and serve as measures for evaluating a collaborative's progress and for holding partners accountable. Long-term goals point to the results partners hope to see in two to three years or even farther into the future. Short-term goals focus on more specific and immediate results and help to keep partners motivated and enthused. The following questions serve as criteria for well-formed goals:

- Does the goal suggest a positive outcome, rather than a decrease in a problem? *(Achievements—not problems—are the focus of well-formed goals.)*
- Is the goal realistic? *(Unrealistic goals cause many collaboratives to collapse.)*
- Is the goal measurable? *(If not, partners will have no way of knowing whether they are making progress.)*
- Is the goal stated in clear and concrete terms? *(The language of a well-formed goal is specific and understandable to everyone.)*

The following are examples of goals set by collaboratives working to change and improve community service systems:

- To increase employment by 20 percent;
- To increase high school graduation rates by 10 percent;
- To establish a respite care resource for families of children with disabilities; and
- To provide children's books free to low-income families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Goals are subject to revision as new partners join a collaborative, as unexpected events unfold, or as the collaborative journey takes a change in direction.

- Step Four: Examine and Select Strategies

Once goals are defined, collaborative partners must decide on the strategies for achieving them. Therefore, in this step, partners take an inventory of possible strategies and choose those that are most likely to produce the goals within the constraints of their resources. Partners should always compare the strategies to their mission statement to ensure consistency.

- Step Five: Develop a Plan of Action

In this last step, an action plan is prepared; it maps out the steps partners will take to implement the chosen strategies. For each action, the plan specifies which partner or partners are responsible, the time frame for completion, accountability indicators, and anticipated costs. Actions are the partners' steps for moving the strategies forward. They may include getting letters of commitment from membership organizations, drafting interagency agreements, revising agency policies and procedures, developing a communications or promotional plan, joint agency training, grant writing, or fund-raising.

Taking Action

Taking action, the fourth stage of the collaborative process, involves implementing the plan of action developed by the partners to achieve their mission and goals. Sometimes, before going full scale with the collaborative initiative, partners decide to do a pilot project. The results of that test or project are measured and evaluated by the partners to identify any changes needed in the initiative or action plan.

For example, an initiative designed to provide young, first-time mothers with parenting support and education might be tested out in a neighborhood, with results showing that the mothers' participation in social activities was much higher than in educational activities. Expansion of the initiative into other neighborhoods would take the participation finding into account, perhaps by making the activities for mothers both social and educational.

Taking action demonstrates the deepening commitment of partners to the collaborative. It is a time for partners to do what is necessary to realize the results of their hard work and careful planning. With measures for determining the action plan's progress in hand, partners have a means for evaluating the initiative's success. Along the way, partners may discover the need to revisit earlier collaborative stages or strategic planning steps. Collaboration is rarely, if ever, a static process. Partners must always remain open to change and be ready to respond to new developments and evaluation findings.

Evaluation

Evaluation tells partners how well they and their strategies are working and guides decisions on changes or modifications to the collaborative. While evaluation by outside specialists may be preferable, much information can be obtained through low-cost self-evaluations.

Ongoing self-evaluation does not need to be complex. Finding out what's working and what corrections might make things work better can come from a relatively simple evaluation that includes asking questions on effort, efficiency, and effectiveness. Handout 8 serves as an example for a collaborative's self-assessment.

Module 4

Instructions

This module, *Practicing the Collaborative Process*, builds on the skills taught in Module 1, Module 2, and Module 3 of this guide; it is essential for participants to be familiar with the information presented in earlier activities. If participants are unfamiliar with the collaborative process and/or unable to complete activities from these modules, be sure to provide an extensive overview using each module's background information.

Activity 4-1: Dream House

Purpose: To provide practice in developing a shared vision.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 1: *Dream House Discussion Guide*
- Handout 2: *A Call for Action*
- Handout 3: *A Vision for Change*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Prepare the group for a drawing exercise.* Present the activity's purpose. Divide participants into small groups. Distribute one sheet of newsprint, a marker, and tape to each group.

   (b) Explain that a dream house is "the ideal home." Ask participants to take a minute or two to mentally create a vision of their dream house.

   (c) Tell the groups that their task is to draw a group dream house on the sheet of newsprint, following two basic rules: 1) Group members take turns drawing the house, with each member drawing one line at a time and then passing the marker on to the next member; 2) No talking is permitted during the drawing exercise. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for groups to complete their dream house drawings.

Trainer Preparation Note: Participants may ask you about the shape or length of the lines for the dream house. Respond by going over the instructions and noting that no particular shape or length is specified.

   (d) Once the drawings are completed, call time and suggest each group add a name or title to its dream house drawing. Ask the groups to tape their drawings on the front wall of the room.

2. *Initiate small group discussions of the drawing exercise.* Distribute handout 1 to each group as a discussion guide. Allow 20 minutes for the small groups to discuss their dream house drawing experiences.

3. *Debrief the drawing exercise.* Reconvene the large group. Ask for a volunteer from each small group to come forward and talk for a minute or two about his/her group's dream house and drawing experiences.

4. *Provide a brief presentation on developing a shared vision.* Explain that in the dream house activity, each group member brought an individual vision to the exercise; however, the group needed to work together to develop a shared vision. Review the concept of a shared vision, based on the module's background information. Encourage participants to make comments or ask questions.

5. (a) *Prepare participants for an individual exercise.* Distribute handout 2. Give participants a few minutes to read the calls for action. Then, instruct each participant to choose a call for action.

   (b) Distribute handout 3 to participants and instruct participants to complete **part 1**. Explain that there will be time later for sharing their vision. Allow 10 minutes for participants to complete part 1 of the handout.

6. (a) *Initiate a small group exercise to create a shared vision.* Ask participants to group themselves based on their chosen call for action (handout 2).

   (b) Describe the task and explain that you want the members of each small group to work together to create a shared vision for change. Refer small groups to handout 3.

   (c) Ask each small group to appoint a facilitator and a recorder/reporter. Explain that when the large group reconvenes, the reporter for each small group will be asked to present the group's shared vision. Allow 30 minutes for small groups to complete the task.

Trainer Preparation Note: Suggest that small groups begin by having members take turns presenting their individual visions for change, as captured on **part 1** of handout 3. Explain that, after the sharing process, group members should move on to **part 2**.

7. (a) *Debrief the small group exercise.* Reconvene the large group. Ask the group for general reactions to the exercise by asking, for example:

   - Was it easy or hard to come up with a shared vision?
   - What happened in your group?

   (b) Ask for reporters to take turns presenting the individual pictures and the shared vision. Make sure reporters begin by identifying the group they were in; that is, the group's call for action.

   (c) When the reports are complete, raise the following questions for discussion:

   - Is each group's vision clear to you? Do you understand what each group wants for children and families?
   - Do you believe your group succeeded in knitting everyone's individual picture for change into a larger shared vision? Why? Why not?

8. *Close the activity.* In bringing the activity to a close, make sure the group understands that in real life, defining a vision in which all partners are committed takes ongoing conversations. Encourage participants to ask questions or comment about the activity.

Activity 4-2 ***Recruiting Partners***

Purpose: To enhance skills in selecting and engaging partners in a collaborative effort and in developing a base of common knowledge.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 2: *A Call for Action*
- Handout 4: *Selecting Collaborative Partners*
- Handout 5: *Engaging Partners and Learning About Each Other*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. (a) *Lead a warm-up discussion.* Explain that a call for action is an issue, problem, concern, or need that ignites people to act. Pose this question to the group: "What needs or events might trigger a call for action and the start of a collaborative effort?".

   (b) Reinforce and add to the group's responses by covering the points below:

   - Collaborative partnerships can start in various ways. Some start when policy-makers encourage or require agencies to establish interagency work groups or develop interagency agreements. Others grow from projects that are funded to demonstrate collaborative approaches to serving families. Sometimes, a traumatic community event—the death of a child, a drive-by shooting, or cuts in a vital service—unites different community stakeholders into a collaborative partnership.

   - Collaborative partnerships can be started by high profile community leaders, the behind-the-scenes work of agency administrators and managers, the efforts of direct-service providers, and/or consumers who decide to act on a concern.

2. (a) *Prepare the group for the activity.* Explain that in this activity participants will form small groups to examine two critical collaboration milestones: 1) involving the right people; and 2) developing a base of common knowledge among partners; that is, learning as much as possible about each other's organizations, beliefs, goals, objectives, and cultures.

   (b) Refer the group to handout 2. After reviewing the calls for action on the handout, ask participants to raise other issues they would like to see addressed through a collaborative effort. Record responses on a sheet of newsprint.

(c) Using the background information on **Getting Together** as a guide, provide a brief overview on factors influencing the choice of partners.

3. *Form small groups based on the calls for action.* Quickly go over the examples of the calls for action on handout 2 and the sheet of newsprint. Divide the group into small groups, each group representing collaborative initiators who have decided to act—to respond to one of the calls for action.

Trainer Preparation Note: Allow participants to join the small group of their choice. If more than eight participants choose the same small group, suggest that the group subdivide into smaller groups, having 4 or 5 members each. Do not require participants to form small groups around the calls for action on handout 2 if they are more interested in those on the newsprint list.

4. *Provide instructions on the small group activity.* Ask each group to appoint a facilitator. Then, refer the small groups to handout 4, which they are to complete during the small group activity. Allow 30 minutes for the small groups to complete the task.

5. (a) *Debrief the small group activity.* Ask participants for general reactions or comments about the small group activity. Ask for a reporter to volunteer and summarize the outcome of his/her small group's choices for collaborative partners, following the framework on handout 4.

   (b) After hearing the volunteer's report, ask participants to suggest other potential partners for the collaborative effort.

   (c) Repeat **steps 5(a) and 5(b)** above until reports from all small groups have been presented and discussed.

6. (a) *Examine strategies for engaging partners and developing a base of common knowledge.* Provide a brief overview on engaging partners and building a base of common knowledge, based on the background information on **Building Trust and Ownership.**

   (b) Refer the group to handout 5 and review the strategies. Ask participants during the review:

   - Has anyone already tried this strategy?
   - How did it work for you?

(b) Reconvene the small groups. Write the following three questions on newsprint for the small groups to consider during their discussions:

- How will we divide the task of recruiting partners for our collaborative effort? Who will contact whom? Why?
- What will we actually say or do to engage potential partners?
- What will we actually say or do to develop a base of common knowledge among potential partners?

Allow 30 minutes for the small group discussions.

7. (a) *Process the small group discussion.* Reconvene the large group. Ask for examples of specific strategies identified by the small groups for getting potential partners to the table and for developing a common knowledge base.

   (b) As shown in the groups' examples, emphasize that strategies must be tailored to:

   - The relationships that already exist between collaborative initiators and potential partners;
   - The uniqueness of each collaborative effort; and,
   - The individual needs, interests, and benefits to each potential partner.

8. *Close the activity.* In closing, stress that recruiting key partners and developing a base of common knowledge take time and commitment on the part of collaborative initiators. Point out that new partners may be added as the collaborative develops and that learning about each other is an ongoing process. Emphasize that successful collaborations build on individual strengths and talents and foster new ideas.

Activity 4-3: Starting a Collaboration

Purpose: To develop the skills required for the start-up of a collaboration, including choosing and recruiting partners, developing a base of common knowledge, and developing a shared vision.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 3: *A Vision for Change*
- Handout 4: *Selecting Collaborative Partners*
- Handout 5: *Engaging Partners and Learning About Each Other*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

1. *Provide an overview of the coaching activity.* Explain to participants that the purpose of this activity is to help them develop the skills necessary for starting a collaborative effort:

   - Choosing and recruiting partners;
   - Learning about each other; and
   - Defining a shared vision.

2. *Involve participants in identifying a call for action.* Explain that community partnerships can be initiated by anyone who wants to see change; collaboratives usually start when an individual or a small group decides to act. Encourage participants to talk freely about the needs or issues that warrant a call for action.

3. (a) *Describe the process for developing a shared vision among collaborative partners.* Use the module's key concept on **Developing a Shared Vision** to guide your remarks.

   (b) Revisit the calls for action discussed in **step 2.** Ask participants to select a call for action and share their vision for change. Encourage participants to think about how the lives of Head Start children and families would be different if the call for action were addressed through a collaborative effort.

   (c) Explain to participants that they have taken the first step in the development of a vision for a collaborative effort. Refer participants to handout 3; explain that the handout is a tool collaborative partners can use to develop a shared vision with interested partners.

4. (a) *Identify potential collaborative initiators/organizers.* Review factors affecting partner recruitment, using the background information on **Getting Together.**

   (b) Refer participants to handout 4. Review the worksheet categories and have participants identify potential partners to assist with the selected call for action.

   (c) Ask participants to choose three people from the handout who they would like to recruit as partners for the collaborative effort; for the purpose of the upcoming homework assignment, these people should not be someone participants already have a strong working relationship.

5. *Examine strategies for engaging partners and learning about each other.* Explain that engaging partners and building a base of common knowledge is another critical milestone in the collaborative process (see **Building Trust and Ownership** in the background information section of this module). Refer participants to handout 5 and ask participants to share their ideas for ways to engage partners and to learn more about them. Add the participants' ideas to the handout.

6. (a) *Prepare participants for a homework assignment*. For homework, explain that you want participants to pick out one of the strategies for engaging partners. Direct the participants' attention back to the three potential partners they selected in **step 4(c)** and ask them to try the selected strategy with them in the next two to three weeks.

   (b) Give participants the chance to practice (through impromptu role playing with you) what they will say to the potential partners during initial contacts. Make sure participants understand that initial contacts with potential partners are times for building trust, learning about each other, and sharing mutual concerns; no specific decisions about working together have been made yet—that is the collaborative partners' task.

   (c) As necessary, help participants refine or expand the chosen strategy and prepare a plan for carrying it out. Offer to be available to participants if any questions, concerns, or barriers arise as they carry out their homework assignment. Suggest that if they are unable to meet with the three potential partners they chose, they should choose others from the list developed. Set up a time for debriefing the homework.

7. *Debrief the homework assignment.* Ask participants to describe the process and outcome of their homework assignment, based upon the following questions:

   - What did you say to the potential partners during your first visit? How did they react?
   - What did you learn about the potential partners? Their organizations?
   - During your visits, did you discuss some mutual concerns related to your call for action? Describe the discussion.
   - How did your ideas for a collaborative effort change as a result of your conversation or visit?
   - Are any of the people you met with interested in joining you in an exploration of collaborative possibilities? Or, at least meeting with you again?
   - What are your next steps?

8. *Discuss plans for pursuing collaborative possibilities.* Go over the next steps identified by participants in **step 7.** Help participants map out a plan for carrying out the steps.

9. *Close the coaching activity.* Remind participants that the development of a shared vision must occur with the partners. Suggest that participants meet again with the potential partners to determine whether they are ready to act—to explore possibilities for a collaborative effort. Point out that

participants will be able to help the collaborative move forward by sharing what they have learned about selecting partners, developing a base of common knowledge, and creating a shared vision. Offer to be available to participants as they implement their next steps.

Activity 4-4: Strategic Planning

Purpose: To provide practice in creating a strategic planning team and being an effective team member.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 6: *Strategic Planning Scenarios*
- Handout 7: *Strategic Planning Worksheet*
- Handout 8: *Evaluating the Progress*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

> **Trainer Preparation Note:** This activity's small group strategic planning exercise takes about four hours to complete and one hour to debrief. Considering the amount of time, as well as the intensity of the exercise, you may want to divide the activity into two sessions, preferably on consecutive days or within the same week. On the second day, small groups should be ready to start with step 4 on handout 7.

1. (a) *Introduce the activity.* Present the purpose of the activity and give a brief overview. Remind participants that strategic planning is the third stage of the collaborative process. (The first two stages, Getting Together and Building Trust and Ownership, are covered in Activity 4-1, Activity 4-2, and Activity 4-3.)

   (b) Encourage participants to share their experiences as members of planning teams. Explain that strategic planning is critical to a collaborative's success because it confirms partner commitment and establishes a plan of action.

2. *Provide an overview of the strategic planning process.* Using the background information as your guide, describe each of the five strategic planning steps:

   - Step 1: Developing the collaborative's mission statement;
   - Step 2: Assessing the environment and the collaborative's capacities;
   - Step 3: Establishing well-formed goals;
   - Step 4: Examining and selecting strategies; and
   - Step 5: Developing a plan of action.

3. (a) *Initiate the small group strategic planning exercise.* Refer the group to handout 6 and briefly describe the two scenarios. Point out that the group (or several participants) might prefer to pursue a scenario that is unique to their Head Start program, or one discussed during Activity 4-1 or Activity 4-3. If participants wish to pursue other scenarios, record possibilities on newsprint.

   (b) Instruct participants to choose a scenario. Next, divide participants into small groups, based upon the scenario of their choice. Point out that more than one small group may focus on the same scenario. Make sure there are at least five and no more than eight participants in each small group. Instruct each group to appoint a facilitator and a reporter.

   (c) Refer the small groups to handout 7, which provides a set of worksheets to complete during the exercise. Review the instructions on the handout. Offer to be available to the small groups if questions arise or your help is needed. Distribute newsprint, markers, and tape to each small group and instruct them to begin.

Trainer Preparation Note: Periodically check on each small group's progress and spend a few minutes observing the interaction of group members. Have additional copies of the **handout 7, step 5 (Plan of Action)** ready to hand out to small groups. Encourage small groups to take a break midway through the training activity.

4. (a) *Debrief the small group exercise.* Reconvene the large group after four hours. Ask for reporters from each group to come forward, form a panel, and briefly present their group's mission statement, goals, strategies, and plan of action. Organize the reporting back process around the strategic planning scenarios; that is, if more than one group focused on the same scenario, hear all reports on that scenario before going on to another.

   (b) Bring closure to the debriefing by asking for additional comments about the strategic planning process and outcomes.

5. (a) *Discuss evaluation.* Stress the importance of ongoing evaluation throughout the collaborative process. Point out that evaluation serves many purposes, helping partners to: 1) examine how well they work together; 2) bring underlying conflicts to the surface; 3) identify small victories (which keep partners enthused and motivated); 4) discover the collaborative's strengths and needs; and 5) make decisions on changes to strategies and the plan of action.

   (b) Ask small groups to briefly meet again to evaluate their work as a strategic planning team. Distribute handout 8 as a guide for the groups to assess their effort, effectiveness, and efficiency.

6. *Close the activity.* Recap highlights of the activity. Describe taking action based on the information provided in the background information. Encourage the small groups to go forward with their plans by refining them and, when ready, moving on to the next stage of collaboration—taking action. Celebrate!

Activity 4-5: Forming a Strategic Planning Team

Purpose: To provide practice in carrying out the strategic planning process.

Preparation

For this activity you will need:

- Handout 6: *Strategic Planning Scenarios*
- Handout 7: *Strategic Planning Worksheet*
- Handout 8: *Evaluating Progress*
- Newsprint/Markers/Tape

> **Coach Preparation Note:** This activity builds on the skills taught in Activity 4-3. For best results, this training activity should be used as an extension of that activity.

1. (a) *Introduce the activity.* Present the purpose of the activity and review the outcomes of Activity 4-3. Be sure to review the list of potential staff or community representatives recruited or engaged in the call for action during Activity 4-3.

> **Coach Preparation Note:** If participants did not complete Activity 4-3, explore the issues, concerns, or needs (the call for action) that participants would like to focus on during this strategic planning session. Suggest participants review handout 6. Next, brainstorm potential staff or community representatives to engage in the call for action.

2. (a) *Examine strategic planning.* Write the five strategic planning steps of a collaborative on a sheet of newsprint:

   - Step 1: Develop the collaborative's mission statement;
   - Step 2: Assess the environment and the collaborative's capacities;
   - Step 3: Establish well-formed goals;
   - Step 4: Examine and select strategies;
   - Step 5: Develop a plan of action.

(b) Describe strategic planning and each of its steps, using the information in the module's background information to guide your remarks. Encourage participants to ask questions about the steps of strategic planning.

3. (a) *Prepare participants for a homework assignment.* Refer participants to handout 7 and go over the instructions. Explain that for the homework assignment, you want them to complete the worksheet with other interested partners. Encourage participants to work with the potential partners identified in **Activity 4-3.**

   (b) Decide with participants when you will hold the debriefing, allowing enough time for them to meet a few times and complete the strategic planning worksheet. Offer to be available, if help is needed in the meantime.

4. (a) *Debrief and review the strategic planning process.* Guide the review by asking participants to present the completed version of their strategic planning worksheet (handout 7).

   (b) Do not rush the review. Spend time discussing the completed version of each worksheet; help participants refine the worksheets, if needed. Make sure participants consider the following questions during the review:

   - Do you believe your mission will be endorsed or supported by the Head Start community? By stakeholders in the broader community? What can you do to gain support?
   - Do your assessment findings suggest that a collaborative partnership can work? That you will be able to accomplish your mission? What additional data or information might help you make those decisions?
   - Are your goals realistic? Clear and specific? Measurable?
   - Do you believe the strategies you selected are the best routes for reaching your goals? What resources do you need to implement them? What are some resource possibilities? Are other key players or partners needed to implement your strategies?
   - Is your plan of action consistent with your mission statement? Are there any gaps in your plan? Does your plan require any changes in your Head Start program's policies, procedures, or budget?

5. (a) *Explore next steps.* Decide with participants whether additional strategic planning meetings are necessary to finalize their action plan. If so, help them prepare for those meetings by discussing and listing on newsprint what still needs to be done or decided, key players to invite to the meetings, and the roles they will have in the meetings.

(b) If the action plan is complete, point out that participants are now ready to move into the fourth stage of collaboration, taking action, which involves five more milestones: formalizing interagency relationships, implementing the plan of action, deepening the collaborative culture, adapting and expanding the initiative, and evaluating progress. Refer participants to handout 8 for some evaluation guidelines. Offer to be available to participants, as needed, to move their plan of action forward.

6. *Close the activity.* Spend a few minutes recapping highlights from the coaching session. Encourage participants to share what they see as their most outstanding strategic planning accomplishments. Celebrate!

Next Steps: Ideas to Extend Practice

Follow-up training strategies to reinforce the concepts and skills taught in Module 4 are presented below. After completing Module 4, review the strategies with staff and help them choose at least one to work on individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

- **Develop a Collaborative Resource Library**

  Ask for a copy of this training guide's **Resources** section. Look over the resources; decide which organizations you will contact for information or technical assistance and which publications you will order or borrow from local libraries. Collect resource materials for Head Start staff, such as:

  — Local demographic and census data;
  — *KIDS COUNT* reports on your state or community;
  — Community assessment data and reports;
  — A list of individuals or groups who provide consultation, training, and/or technical assistance to collaborative organizers and groups;
  — Descriptions of community organizations that are potential collaborative partners;
  — Information on local foundations and contact persons; and,
  — Descriptions of collaborative partnerships that have formed in other Head Start programs or communities.

- **Support Parents in a Collaborative Effort**

  Talk with Head Start parents individually or in groups about forming a collaborative around a common concern or need. Get interested parents together to explore possibilities for initiating a collaborative effort, or joining an existing one. Offer to serve as the group's mentor throughout their collaborative journey. Along the way provide guidance or training on the challenges of collaboration, including such topics as: selecting the right partners, holding effective meetings, avoiding sandtraps, and creating a conflict resolution process. To enable the parents to be active collaborative partners, provide/arrange for practical supports such as child-care, transportation, meeting space, membership rosters, etc.

- **Visit People Already Involved in a Collaborative Effort**

  Set up a time to visit and talk with people in your community or other communities nearby about their collaboration-building experiences. Discuss the difficulties and successes they experienced along the way. Ask for suggestions and tips on starting a collaborative, selecting and recruiting partners, and developing a shared vision.

- **Conduct a Consumer Focus Group**[5]

  Invite Head Start parents and family members, as well as representatives of the community, to participate in the focus group. Possible questions for the focus group include:

  — What services or resources do you and your children need most?
  — What challenges or barriers do you experience when you seek services or resources?
  — Describe your most positive encounter with a community agency or organization.
  — Describe your most negative encounter.
  — If you could change one part of the way children and families are served now by the community, what would it be?

  To encourage parents and the broader community to participate in the focus group, reach out to them by offering child-care and transportation and by selecting a neighborhood meeting location where they will feel at ease. Assure them that their comments are confidential, or not linked specifically to them. Above all, make sure they know that expressing negative views about Head Start or any other community agency or organization will not affect their good standing or their receipt of services, assistance, or support.

  After the focus group, analyze discussion results and plan how you will initiate a call for action.

- **Take the Strategic Plan to Action**

  Make arrangements with your strategic planning team (i.e., the team formed during Activity 4-4 or 4-5) to continue meeting until your plan of action is ready for implementation. To get ready you may need to:

  — Invite other key collaborative partners to join your team;
  — Review the strategic planning steps and incorporate the ideas and suggestions of new partners, as decided upon by the group;
  — Discuss the resources needed to implement your action plan and strategies for obtaining them;
  — Build resource strategies into your action plan; or
  — Identify and list steps for monitoring and evaluating the action plan's implementation.

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[5] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 1: Dream House Discussion Guide

Instructions

Use the questions below to talk about the experience of designing a dream house. Your small group has 20 minutes to complete the exercise.

1. What was the most challenging part of the dream house exercise?

2. How does the dream house you first thought of compare to the group's version?

3. What do you think about your group's dream house?

4. What did you notice about your behaviors, or the behaviors of group members during the exercise? Describe specific behaviors that helped or hindered the exercise, such as eye contact, body language, leadership (or lack of it), creativity, and motivation.

5. What might have helped your group work better? What was missing? What was needed?

Handout 2: A Call for Action

Overview

*A **call for action** is an issue, problem, concern, or need that ignites people to act. Four sample calls for action are described in the following scenarios. Which call for action would you like to be part of?*

Call for Action #1

Alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use is a problem you see far too often in your community and in your work with families. Alcohol and cigarettes are readily available to teens and children. Many teen and young mothers you know smoke during pregnancy and around their children. Many families you know are worried about the drug dealing that plagues their neighborhood. Many are so worried that they are afraid to allow their children to play outside. Moreover, you're hearing from more parents each day about alcohol and drug abuse occurring within their own families and its shattering impact on family life. You want something done about the problem!

Call for Action #2

Your Head Start program has had an enrollment waiting list of at least 50 children for each of the past three years. You expect the waiting list to reach a total of at least 100 this year because of the recent work requirements placed on parents. Other child-care programs in your community also have long waiting lists. You believe that many children are being left with older siblings or babysitters who are not equipped to care for them. You're aware of some possible sources of funding for expanding Head Start and other child-care programs. But there seem to be no suitable sites for the centers in the neediest neighborhoods. You want high-quality, early childhood educational programs for every child in your community!

Call for Action #3

Your Head Start program is trying to help families with the transition from the Head Start program into the local elementary schools. Some of your troubling issues are overcrowded kindergarten classes, gaps in special education resources, and the lack of responsiveness on the part of community service providers to the diverse languages and cultures of Head Start families. As a result, you see many children and families losing the gains they made at Head Start; the supportive educational and social environment, which Head Start provided, is now missing in their lives. Even parents who were very involved in Head Start are finding the transition difficult; many have come back to tell you that the role of parents in elementary school is limited to fund-raising, or that teachers have little or no time to meet with them. You want the situation to change!

Call for Action #4

Your Head Start program received a grant last year from a local foundation to purchase computers for staff offices and children's classrooms. Most of the time the computers go unused. Numerous opportunities for staff, teachers, and parents to learn about computer use and educational software have come up, but almost no one has shown interest. You want to see your Head Start program be part of the exciting technological wave of the future with staff benefitting from computer-generated reports, video-conferencing, and distance learning. Moreover, you want the world of computers and the internet opened for Head Start children and families. You are ready to act!

Handout 3: A Vision for Change

Overview

This is a tool for helping collaborative partners develop a shared vision of a better life for children and families. Think about the issue or need that prompted the call for action. What needs to change? How would life be better for children and families? Imagine it is five years from now and life for Head Start children and families is better. What do you see happening in the community? What are the children and families doing?

Part 1. Write down a few phrases that describe your vision in the space below. Add some pictures or symbols, if you wish. Be as specific as possible, so that others can see and understand your vision.

My Vision of a Better Life

Part 2. Develop a shared vision of a better life for children and families by discussing **part 1,** above, with your partners. Reach a consensus on what you want to see in the future.

Our Shared Vision Is:

Handout 4: Selecting Collaborative Partners[6]

Instructions
Appoint a facilitator and a recorder/reporter for your small group. Go over the call for action scenario selected by your group from handout 2 or from the newsprint list. Take time to discuss the selected scenario; add your own experiences and concerns to the scenario to make it real to your group, your Head Start program, and your community.

GUIDELINES
As collaborative organizers who have decided to act, your next task is to identify and recruit all the potential players with a stake in the call for action. Use the guidelines below to decide who you will invite to the table to explore mutual concerns and possibilities for a collaborative effort.

☐ First, consider stakeholders you already know and share a relationship

☐ Consider other organizations or individuals that you do not know as well but you believe will bring clout and commitment to the collaborative effort.

☐ Consider stakeholders who have the expertise and skills that your collaborative effort needs. For example, consider individuals who are experts or very knowledgeable about the issues surrounding the call for action and the community's history, as well as individuals with skills in organizing meetings, managing tasks, facilitating groups, writing, speaking, developing resources and fund-raising, and resolving conflicts. Do the stakeholders have policy-making authority?

☐ Consider stakeholder diversity. Do the identified stakeholders represent diverse community populations? Are the ethnic, racial, and cultural groups that make up your community represented by the stakeholders? Are different sectors of the community represented (e.g., private organizations, public agencies, foundations, businesses, religious organizations, grassroots groups, the media, consumers, elected officials)?

☐ Consider stakeholder power to achieve results. Powers that are helpful include connections, resources, position, persuasion, charisma, visibility, decision-making authority, and integrity. Some stakeholders may not have the time to remain with the collaborative for long, but they may be very good at attracting others who will work hard.

☐ Sixth, consider individuals or organizations that may be in a position to block the collaborative's efforts. What are the possibilities of including them—and helping them see the advantages of working together?

☐ Consider the number of stakeholders you want to recruit. No more than 15 is ideal for initial efforts.

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[6] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelarch Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services 1993).

Handout 4: Selecting Collaborative Partners (continued)

PARTNER RECRUITMENT WORKSHEET

For the categories below, list the names of individuals or organizations that your group would like to recruit. Your group does not have to identify potential partners for all the categories; instead, focus on potential partners that you believe are needed most for the start-up phase of your effort. When the large group reconvenes, your group will be asked to present its list of potential partners.

Category 1: The Head Start Community (staff, volunteers, policy-makers and governing board members).

1.
2.
3.
4.

Category 2: Consumers (the people who use services and represent, for example, Head Start Advisory Councils, parent/teacher groups, religious organizations, civic groups, community associations, neighborhood clubs, and tenant groups).

1.
2.
3.
4.

Category 3: Public-Sector Organizations (schools, libraries, government-supported human service agencies, and other publicly funded agencies, such as public housing, public safety, or city planning).

1.
2.
3.
4.

Handout 4: Selecting Collaborative Partners (continued)

Category 4: Private Providers, Non-Profits, and Grassroots Organizations (United Way, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, cultural groups, advocacy groups, health and hospital organizations, early childhood programs, colleges and universities, religious and civic organizations, and local foundations).

1.

2.

3.

4.

Category 5: Businesses and Business Organizations (those that bring skills in management, marketing, finance; resources; real estate; or opportunities for parent employment and job training).

1.

2.

3.

4.

Category 6: Elected Officials (school board and city council representatives).

1.

2.

3.

4.

Category 7: Natural Community Leaders (community activists).

1.

2.

3.

4.

Handout 5: Engaging Partners and Learning About Each Other

__Overview__
Once potential partners are identified, attention turns to building trust and ownership by engaging them in the collaborative and developing a base of common knowledge. In the most effective collaboratives, partners take time to understand each other's organizations and explore their differences to avoid misunderstandings. This requires learning about each other's services and resources, goals and objectives, and work cultures and constraints. Developing common knowledge also means understanding personal similarities and differences.

ENGAGING PARTNERS

Look over the strategies listed below. There is space at the end of each list for adding strategies that have worked for you or for others in your group.

☐ Research on organizations and individuals that you want to recruit for the collaborative before you approach them;

☐ Get to know the key players in the organizations; that is, the people who do the day-to-day workload. Invite them to visit your program;

☐ Present information about your program in a way that can be easily understood. Explain your program and what you do without professional terms or acronyms;

☐ If possible, present the collaborative effort as a win-win situation. Point out the potential benefits of working together;

☐ Do as much preparation as possible so you can show potential partners there is an easier or better way of doing business;

☐ Be willing to listen to and understand the needs, interests, goals, and missions of potential partners;

☐ Offer to share a resource, assist in an activity, or try a different way;

☐ Give people credit for what they have already achieved for children and families;

☐ Make it clear that the purpose of initial meetings is to explore mutual concerns and collaborative possibilities.

Additional Strategies:

☐

☐

Handout 5: Engaging Partners and Learning About Each Other (continued)

DEVELOPING/EXPANDING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE[7]

Some strategies for learning about each other are:

- ☐ Hold meetings at each other's organizations to give people a sense of the scope of the collaborative;
- ☐ Plan visits to programs operated by partners. Make sure the visits are more than just a quick walk-through. Take time to talk about what you learned;
- ☐ Ask partners to discuss views about each other's organizations. Then have partners describe their own organizations. Begin to separate fact from stereotype;
- ☐ Have everyone draw a simple picture of how they see their organization in relation to the community, families, and other partners. Discuss the variations and their implications;
- ☐ Describe how children and families receive services in each organization;
- ☐ Make an "alphabet soup." Have partners list acronyms and key phrases they use daily and define them;
- ☐ Set a "no numbers/no letters" rule to encourage the use of words instead of shorthand terms that few people understand;
- ☐ Arrange for day-long visits between organizations to create knowledge, trust, and commitment among direct-services staff;
- ☐ Use qualified trainers to run workshops for partners on team dynamics, consensus building, diversity, and conflict management; or
- ☐ Use social activities to promote different kinds of conversations and alliances among partners.

Additional Strategies:

- ☐
- ☐

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[7] Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

Handout 6: Strategic Planning Scenarios

Instructions

*Read the two scenarios below and decide if one captures your interest or write your own scenario in the space under **Strategic Planning Scenario #3.** In the small group activity you will become a member of a strategic planning team, responsible for carrying out the five strategic planning steps. Choose the scenario carefully; it should be one that is important to you and your work.*

Strategic Planning Scenario #1: Working Toward a Vision of Positive Fathering

Your strategic planning team has a vision of fathers being the best fathers they can be. Studies show that adults who have had nurturing fathers typically enjoy good physical health, build strong marriages, develop close friendships, and experience life satisfaction. However, studies also show that a significant number of today's fathers grew up in homes without father role models. Furthermore, fathers today are expected to take a bigger part in caring for and nurturing their children. As fathers take on these changing parenting responsibilities, they are increasingly experiencing work and family conflicts.

You want to see father-friendly environments in your community for fathers who live with their children, who visit their children, or who are (or are willing to be) father substitutes. You want to see all fathers spend more time and have more fun with their children, know more about their children's development and age-appropriate behaviors, and be more involved in their children's education. You want fathers, especially those who are single parents, to have a variety of opportunities to talk about parenting experiences and to receive guidance and support from other fathers.

Your vision requires collaborative community partnerships. Your strategic planning team is meeting to develop a plan for getting your community to do a better job of supporting and educating fathers.

Strategic Planning Scenario #2: Working Toward a Vision of Partnership in Serving Families

Your strategic planning team has a vision of service providers from different agencies working as partners with families. Studies show that families who receive services from two or more agencies at once often get caught up in different agency requirements, goals, and plans that leave them confused. Instead of reinforcing each other's work, service providers from different agencies tend to work independently and follow their own agendas; they may not even be aware that other agencies are involved with the same family. As a result, important and sometimes critical information about children and families is never shared and families work on too many, or even conflicting, goals at the same time.

Handout 6: Strategic Planning Scenarios (continued)

Strategic Planning Scenario #2: Working Toward a Vision of Partnership in Serving Families (continued)

You want to see scarce agency resources put to better use for families in your Head Start community. You want the families to have unified and coordinated plans to help them achieve their goals. You want to be able to contribute to and support the work of other service providers involved with Head Start families on a family-to-family basis. You want more opportunities in your community for service providers from different agencies to meet and learn about each other, to participate in training programs together, and to become true partners in their work with families.

Your vision of how service providers can work together to support and serve Head Start families requires collaborative partnerships with a number of key community agencies. As a starting point, your strategic planning team is meeting to develop a plan for working more closely and effectively with at least one other agency in your community—one that is frequently involved with families that Head Start serves.

Strategic Planning Scenario #3: Working Toward a Vision of ...

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet[8]

Instructions
Your small group represents a strategic planning team, which is meeting to address the issues, needs, or concerns selected. This handout guides you through the five steps of the strategic planning process; there are activities to complete for each step. Strategic planning steps are often revisited, as new partners join the effort, as new information points to another strategy, or as new resources are discovered. Take each step as far as you can. The worksheet includes space to record the issues your team encounters and ideas for resolving them. If your team decides to follow up with the exercise in "real life," you will be clear about what your team needs to do to complete the step and move forward. ***You have four hours to complete the process.*** *When the large group reconvenes, the reporter for your group will be asked to present your team's plan of action.*

■ Step 1: Develop a Mission Statement

Overview
A mission statement is the starting point for strategic planning; it specifies the collaborative's role in realizing its vision. A carefully crafted mission statement reflects the shared vision (the direction), the unique purpose (what you want to achieve), and the values and beliefs (the rationale) of the collaborative. Below are excerpts from a mission statement prepared by the Racine Community Coalition for Youth.

> **Shared Vision:** "Making Racine the nation's most youth-friendly community."
>
> **Purpose:** "We will make Racine a place where 1) youth are wanted, respected, capable, and liked; 2) children and youth have a healthy start and feel safe and secure; 3) children and youth are helped to reach their personal, academic and vocational potential. . . ."
>
> **Values and Beliefs:** "We believe our community's future depends on its youth. As we make it right for our young people, we will also strengthen families, and ultimately, we will make it right for the whole community. Effective prevention and early intervention are crucial for the success of our families and children. Moral and ethical development of children is as vital as physical and intellectual growth; every person and organization that touches the life of a child must make a real contribution. . ."
>
> **Mission Statement:** "To make Racine the nation's most youth-friendly community, every member of the community will be personally involved in supporting and guiding Racine's children as they move from infancy to adulthood."

The following questions serve as guides for the development of a mission statement .

— Does our mission statement describe what we will accomplish and for whom?

— Is the scope of work (how big, how many, how much) suggested in our mission statement?

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[8] Adapted from U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, *Strengthening Homeless Families: A Coalition-Building Guide* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1996).

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

- **Step 1 (continued)**

  — Does our mission statement convey our shared vision, unique purpose, and values and beliefs? Is the mission statement connected to, but different from, the missions of our individual organizations?

  — Is our mission statement easy for everyone to understand?

Instructions
Based upon the selected scenario, develop your mission statement. It may be helpful to brainstorm words or phrases that describe your team's vision, purpose, values, and beliefs. Jot down the words or phrases on newsprint. Decide which words or phrases are most important and record below. Remember, you can revisit this step at a later time. You have 30 minutes to complete this step.

Our Mission Statement

Vision:

Purpose:

Values and Beliefs:

Mission Statement:

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

■ Step 2: Assess the Environment and the Collaborative's Capacities

Overview

This step involves two parts: 1) an environmental analysis and 2) a capacity assessment.

Environmental Analysis

Instructions

Conduct an environmental analysis by taking a look at what is happening or developing in your community. Depending upon your mission, you may want to consider economic and population changes; funding trends; political and social forces; federal, state, or local laws and regulations; agency policies and procedures; and other collaboratives underway in your community. Talk about the changes or developments that you know about; share as much information as you can about them and their likely impact; identify information still needed by the team to make informed decisions. Jot down the key outcomes of your discussions. You have 30 minutes to complete the environmental analysis. Remember, you can revisit it later.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

- **Step 2 (continued)**

Capacity Assessment

Instructions

The second part of this step involves an assessment of whether the collaborative has the ability to accomplish its mission. Review the developments, trends, and other factors you listed in the environmental analysis worksheet and decide which ones are most likely to have the greatest impact on the collaborative. Talk about the strengths (skills, talents, advantages, and resources) that you bring individually and collectively to the collaborative as well as what you see as lacking. Consider the likely benefits of collaborative action as well as what might happen if no action is taken in the immediate future. You have 30 minutes to compete the capacity assessment. Remember, you can revisit it later.

Strengths

1.

2.

3.

4.

Needs

1.

2.

3.

4.

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

■ Step 3: Establishing Well-formed Goals

Overview
At this step, your team must develop well-formed goals. Goals are specific statements of what collaborative partners intend to do; they are indicators of the change partners want to achieve and serve as measures for evaluating a collaborative's progress and for holding partners accountable. Long-term goals point to the results partners hope to see in two to three years or even further into the future. Short-term goals focus on more specific and immediate results and help to keep partners motivated and enthused.

Goals should be developed using the following criteria:

- Does this goal focus on the positive?
- Is this goal realistic? Achievable?
- Can this goal be measured?
- Is this goal stated in clear and specific terms?

Instructions
List the goals or desired results that will indicate the collaborative's success in accomplishing its mission. After you decide on the goals, compare them to the information you recorded on the environmental analysis and capacity assessment. If large gaps are found between your goals and your potential to achieve them, revise the goals until the gaps are minimized. Your group has 45 minutes to complete this step.

Goals

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

■ Step 4: Examine and Select Strategies

Instructions

This step begins with an exploration of ways to achieve the goals defined by your team. Begin by recording your goals below. Then, brainstorm the various strategies or routes for achieving each goal. Once you have a list of possible strategies, take a close look at the potential impacts, benefits, and costs of each strategy. Then, select those you believe are feasible. Finally, review your mission statement and make sure the strategies you selected are consistent with the collaborative's purpose, values, and beliefs. List the strategies you selected for each goal below. You have 45 minutes to complete this step.

GOAL 1:

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Strategy 3

GOAL 2:

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Strategy 3

GOAL 3:

Strategy 1

Strategy 2

Strategy 3

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

■ Step 5: Develop a Plan of Action

Overview
This step involves:

- ☐ Mapping out the actions for implementing the strategies selected by your team;
- ☐ Deciding who will take responsibility for each action;
- ☐ Setting target dates for completing each action;
- ☐ Deciding on standards or measures of accountability (i.e., proof of actions taken); and,
- ☐ Preparing a budget of each action's expected costs.

Instructions
You have one hour to complete the **Plan of Action** on the next page. Use a separate Plan of Action worksheet for **each** goal and strategy selected by the group. Remember, when the large group reconvenes, your reporter will be asked to present your group's mission statement, goals, strategies, and action plan. Build plenty of opportunities for success into your plan. Start with small actions to ensure quick success and to give yourself some time to learn and practice before taking on bigger or riskier tasks.

Handout 7: Strategic Planning Worksheet (continued)

- **Step 5 (continued)**

Plan of Action[9]

GOAL # ______________ *STRATEGY #* ______________

Actions to Be Taken	*Who Is Responsible?*	*By When?*	*With What Accountability?*	*At What Cost?*
			TOTAL COST	

Issues and Ideas to Talk About Later:

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[9] Adapted from Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994).

Handout 8: Evaluating the Progress

Overview

As an ongoing process, evaluation tells partners how well they and their strategies are working and guides decisions on changes or modifications to the collaborative effort. While evaluation by outside specialists may be preferable, much information can be obtained through low-cost self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation does not need to be complex. Finding out what's working and what corrections might make things work better can come from a relatively simple evaluation that includes measures of:

Effort

- Are our efforts helping us achieve our mission?
- What significant environmental factors have inhibited or helped our capacity to collaborate?
- Do we need to bring some new partners to the table?
- Is our Plan of Action being implemented?

Effectiveness

- Are we reaching the right people?
- Are we making an impact? What's different?
- What happened that we didn't expect?
- Is our Plan of Action still appropriate?

Efficiency

- Are our goals attainable?
- Are our resources sufficient in light of the issues we face? The intensity of our strategies?
- Are we making the best use of our talents and strengths?
- What can we do to make our work more efficient?

Continuing Professional Development

Activities that Head Start programs may find useful for reinforcing and expanding staff training on *Community Partnerships* are presented below.

Continuing Education

Encourage staff to enroll in institutions of higher education or conferences and seminars that are sponsored by a variety of organizations, agencies, and professional associations. Suggest courses related to collaboration, such as grant writing, board development, group dynamics, fund-raising, community organizing, organizational theory and management.

Keep current course catalogs from local community education programs, colleges and universities, and community organizations such as United Way, The Foundation Center, The Support Centers of America, United Jewish Appeal, Children's Defense Fund, etc. The information should include financial aid, scholarships, and other sources of tuition support.

Information Sharing

Promote staff attendance at community meetings that address outstanding community needs. Encourage staff to report the highlights of these meetings and information important to Head Start's work with families to their colleagues. In addition to providing community partnership opportunities, these meetings reinforce the staff's professional role as a child and family advocate within the community.

Peer Study Groups

Help staff organize a study group to focus on the opportunities and challenges of community partnerships. Members of this group can invite experts to speak on topics related to collaboration. Arrange to have community leaders or staff from community organizations conduct workshops or panel discussions for the Head Start staff. In making the arrangements for these sessions, have staff identify the types of information important to them and ask the experts to address those areas. Some possibilities include engaging collaborative partners, information sharing, partnerships with community-based programs, community assessment, and program evaluation.

Encourage staff to commit to personal and professional development by joining professional organizations and discussing publications that provide the latest information on community partnerships. Organizations, books, and journals to suggest are described in the **Resource** section of this guide.

Continuing Professional Development

Increasing Awareness of Community Partners

Have volunteers create a mural or display about community agencies and organizations that are currently collaborating with your Head Start program and are also available as a resource to families. Include program brochures or contact information sheets. Exhibit the mural or display in a prominent location.

Developing a Head Start Collaboration Resource

Form a team of staff, parents, and volunteers to be available as in-house collaboration consultants. When issues arise that could be addressed through a collaborative, have this team identify potential community partners, explore challenges and opportunities, and assess the resources needed for initiating the call for action.

Providing Education on Collaboration

Encourage staff, parents, and members of the community to pursue community partnerships by providing workshops. Possible workshop topics include: community success stories showing the value and benefits of collaboration, overcoming the challenges of collaboration, joint program funding opportunities, and strategic planning.

Books and Journals

- Bruner, Charles. *Thinking Collaboratively: Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy-Makers Improve Children's Services.* Washington, D.C.: Education and Human Services Consortium, 1991.

  This is a policy-maker's guide to designing effective collaborations at state and local levels. It describes the basics of collaboration—what it is and how to know when it is working—and strategies for state policy-makers to use. The Education and Human Service Consortium can be contacted c/o of Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036-5541. Telephone: (202) 822-8405. Fax: (202) 872-4050.

- Gardner, John. *Building Community.* Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1991.

  This book examines the reasons for the current breakdown of community cohesiveness, a breakdown that it characterizes as losses in security, sense of identity, and belonging to a framework of shared assumptions and values. The author reveals both the causes and the consequences of community failure and then shows how a process of regeneration may cause a community to survive or reappear in an altered form. The book can be ordered by calling Independent Sector at 301-490-3229.

- Himmelman, Arthur T. *Communities Working Collaboratively for a Change.* Minneapolis: The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, 1991.

  The monograph presents two approaches to collaboration—betterment and empowerment—the key components and activities of each, as well as how to move from betterment to empowerment. For a free copy, call the Himmelman Consulting Group at (612) 824-5507.

- Hodgkinson, Harold. *Beyond the Schools: How Schools & Communities Must Collaborate to Solve the Problems Facing America's Youth.* Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1991.

  This 28-page booklet presents strategies for developing school/community collaboration . The first section reviews the conditions that place students at risk and presents arguments for the importance of education in avoiding poverty. The second section highlights ten holistic strategies for educational improvement developed by the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association. Copies are available from the American Association of School Administrators at 1801 North Moore St., Arlington, Virginia 22209.

Resources

- Kagan, S.L. *United We Stand: Collaboration for Child Care and Early Education.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1991.

  This publication provides an overview of collaboration, including its social context, rationale, and benefits, and an understanding of the collaborative process in the context of early childhood care and education. Copies can be ordered from the Teachers College Press at P.O. Box 20, Williston, Vermont 05495. Telephone: (800) 575-6566. Fax: (802) 864-7626.

- Levy, Janet, Sharon L. Kagan, and Carol Copple. *Are We Ready?: Collaboration to Support Young Children and Their Families.* Washington, D.C.: Joining Forces, 1992.

  This paper discusses the importance of collaboration across social service and educational sectors as a way of achieving a coherent and integrated system that will insure that children receive a high-quality education while maximizing the use of federal, state, and local resources. To order a free copy contact the Council of Chief State School Officers at 1 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C., 20002-1431.

- McKnight, John L. and John Kretzman. *Building Communities from the Inside Out.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Neighborhood Innovations Network, 1993.

  The guide to what the authors call "asset-based community development" summarizes lessons learned across the United States. It outlines in simple, "neighborhood-friendly" terms what local communities can do to start their own journey down the path of asset-based development. This guide can be ordered by calling the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at (798) 491-3518 or (800) 397-2282.

- Melaville, Atelia I., and Martin J. Blank. *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families With Comprehensive Services.* Washington, D.C.: Education and Human Services Consortium, 1991.

  This study looks at what is needed in inter-agency partnerships and the state's role in local initiatives, as well as the dynamics of working together, guidelines for new partners, and questions to mobilize action. Thirteen program descriptions, a list of resource organizations, and a 56-item bibliography are appended. For more information contact the Education and Human Services Consortium c/o Insitute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036-5541. Telephone: (202) 822-8405. Fax: (202) 872-4050.

- Melaville, Atelia I. and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services.* U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993.

  This book presents a vision of improved coordination of education, health, and human services for families and provides a five-stage process for achieving that vision in communities. Copies can be obtained by writing the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop SSOP, Washington, D.C. 20402-9328.

- *Preparing Collaborative Leaders—A Facilitator's Guide*. Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc., 1994.

  This addresses the challenges facing every collaborative project and each collaborative leader, and offers a road map for each step of the way. Fifteen modules give you the "what" and "how" of designing and implementing a comprehensive leadership development program. The Institute for Educational Leadership can be contacted at (202) 822-8405 or fax: (202) 872-4050.

- Winer, Michael and Karen Ray. *Collaboration Handbook—Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey.* St Paul, Minn.: Amherst H. Wlder Foundation, 1994.

  This handbook describes how to overcome the obstacles to successful collaborations. It asks the question of when collaboration is appropriate and then instructs how to manage the four stages of collaboration through the use of worksheets and collaboration examples. Copies can be ordered by calling (800) 274-6024.

Information Systems

- Samuels, Bryan, Nilofer Ahsan, and Jill Garcia. *Know Your Community: A Step-by-Step Guide to Community Needs and Resources Assessment.* Family Resource Coalition, 1995.

  Based on the Family Resource Council's experience assisting local programs, planners, and community residents, this manual describes how to get information about your community, including hidden resources. It includes sample surveys, data-collection worksheets, progress charts, and a companion diskette. For ordering information, contact the Family Resource Coalition, 200 South Michigan Ave., 16th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60604. Telephone: (312) 341-0900, fax: (312) 341-9361.

Resources

Organizations

- *Child and Family Policy Center.* 100 Court Avenue, Suite 312, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

  The Child and Family Policy Center is a state-based, policy-research implementation organization. The Center's mission is to link research with public policy on issues vital to children and families, thus strengthening families and providing full development opportunities for children. The Center's telephone number is (515) 280-9027.

- *Family Resource Coalition.* 200 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1520, Chicago, Illinois 60604.

  The Family Resource Coalition is a national organization whose immediate goal is to improve the content and expand the number of programs available to parents for strengthening families. The Coalition serves programs, parents, researchers, and policy-makers by providing information and technical assistance related to prevention program models, strategies, and research. You can reach the coalition by telephone at (312) 341-0900 or fax (312) 341-9361.

Audio/Visual

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Great Lakes Resource Access Project. *Collaboration: Because It's Good for Children and Families.* Portage, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Great Lakes Resource Access Project, 1994.

  This resource manual and accompanying videotape provides guidance to local agencies in developing collaborative programs that serve children with disabilities. It also answers some of the questions about collaboration and cooperation between Head Start and local school districts. Examples are drawn from collaborative programs in Wisconsin. Copies can be ordered from the Cooperative Educational Service Agency 5 at 626 E. Slifer St., Portage, Wisconsin 53901. Telephone: (608) 742-8811 or fax (608) 742-2384.

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